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MY QUEEN

MARION MARLOWE ON THE PRAIRIE

OR A THRILLING RIDE ACROSS KANSAS

BY GRACE SHIRLEY

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Here Is Health

53 Leading St., Cleveland, O.,
Oct. 7, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM.
Dear Sir:—I am pleased to inform you that your Remedies have completely cured me. I was troubled with weak lungs and chest, and also had catarrh. I *know* the Slocum System is the best in the world, and I will recommend your medicine to all who may be in need of Remedies of their character.
Yours truly,
HARRY L. LYON.

McComb, Pike Co., Miss.,
Oct. 2, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,
Dear Sir:—I write to let you know that your Remedies have entirely cured my little girl of scrofula and I feel very thankful to you for all your kindness.
Yours respectfully,
MALISIA ADISON.

Wesson, Copiah Co., Miss.,
Oct. 4, 1900.

DR. T. A. SLOCUM,
Dear Sir:—In reply to your kind letter I wish to say that since taking your Remedies I am sound as a dollar. I believe had it not been for your medicine I would now be in my grave. I feel very thankful to you for the cure that was performed in my case, and beg to remain,
Yours sincerely,
CHAS. VAN NORDEN.

Woodland, St. Joseph Co.,
Oct. 9, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,
Dear Sir:—My little boy had catarrh in the head very badly. When he was five years old I saw your medicine advertised and tried it and he now is entirely cured. I can highly recommend your medicine to anyone.
Yours respectfully,
MRS. ASA TABER.

Grove Park, Alachua Co., Fla.,
Oct. 19, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,
Dear Sir:—I received your letter, also the Remedies that you sent at my request and hope you will pardon my long delay in writing to you to recommend your good medicine. The pain in my breast has vanished and I am feeling a great deal stronger than before. I shall recommend your Remedies to all in my town who are suffering from consumption or any disorder of the throat, chest and lungs. Thanking you very kindly for what you have done for me, I remain,
Yours respectfully,
M. L. BOOKER

Utica, Otsego Co., N. Y.
Oct. 5, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,
Dear Sir:—The cough which has troubled me so long is now entirely gone, and I owe my salvation to your wonderful Remedies. I am getting stronger every day, for which I feel very thankful to you, and shall recommend your Remedies to everybody.
Your respectfully,
CHAS. H. DARLING.

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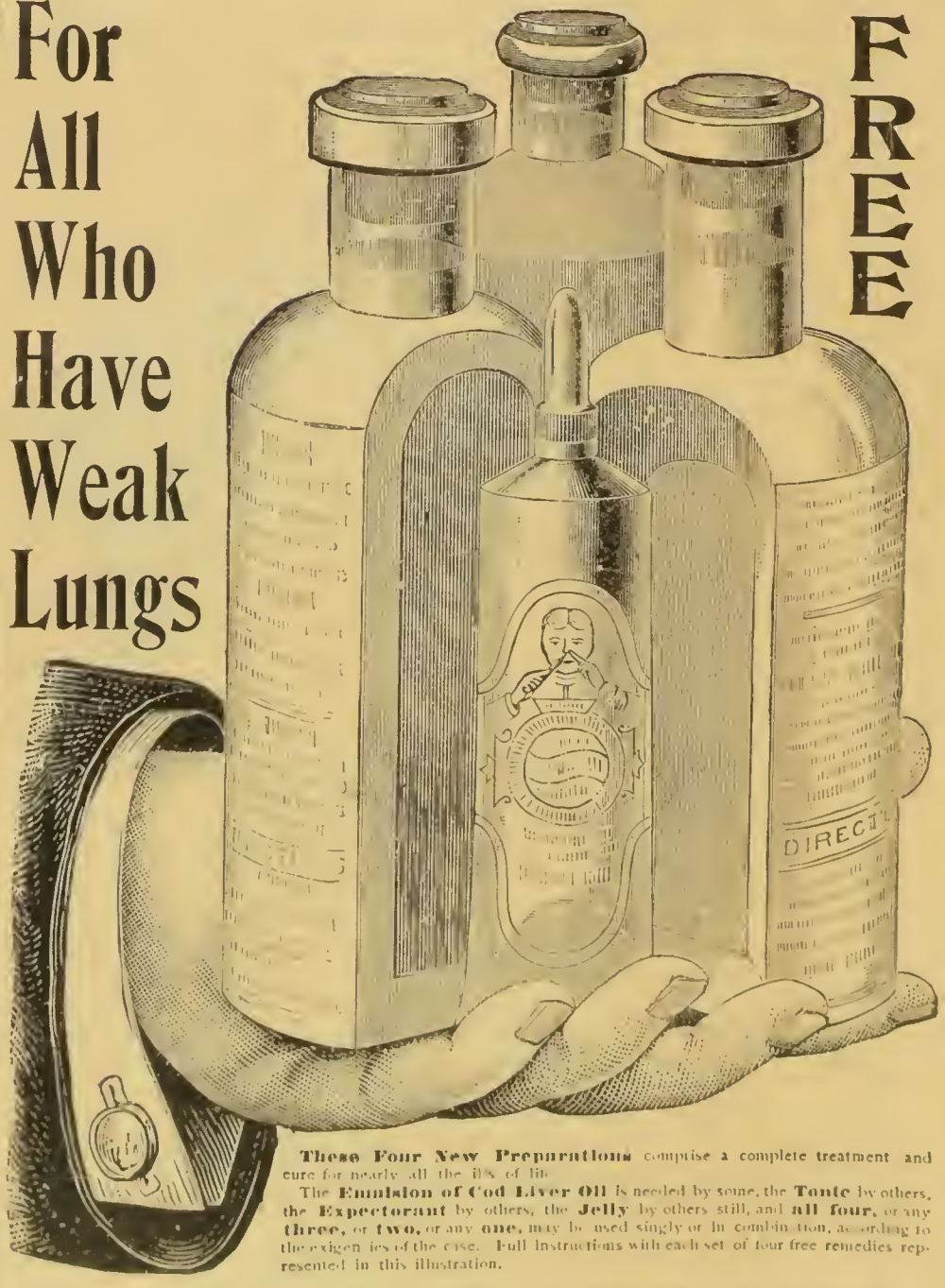

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MY QUEEN
A WEEKLY JOURNAL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

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MARION MARLOWE ON THE PRAIRIE;

OR,

A THRILLING RIDE ACROSS KANSAS.

By GRACE SHIRLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE FORTUNE TELLER.

"Oh, Alma! Look at that sign! Madam Zhangara will tell our fortunes, cast our horoscopes and read our palms all for one dollar! Do let's go in and hear what she has to say! Of course, we will not believe her, but it will be very amusing!"

"Dear me, Marion! What reckless extravagance! Now, if we could just get her to throw in a shampoo and a manicure with her horoscope, I might be tempted to go."

"She'll have to add a free lunch if I go, girls, for I'm as hungry as a bear with all this riding. I tell you what we'll do!' I'll go and order dinner in that bum-looking restaurant across the way, while you go in and learn your fate. Just hold on a minute until I can find some Kansas galoot to look after the horses!"

"They'd look after you, if they heard the pet names you call them, Bert! But you might tackle this long, lanky fellow that is coming, if you are sure he did not hear you!"

Bert Jackson, the comedian of the Temple Theatrical Company, pulled a pair of scrawny-looking horses close to the sidewalk while this conversation was going on and the next minute his three charming companions were standing on the sidewalk before the fortune teller's office.

The place was Kansas City, "on the Kansas side," as they say in that section, but the company was playing in Kansas City, Missouri, which is separated from the Kansas section by nothing more formidable than a State line.

Marion Marlowe, the star of the company, had suggested this visit to the sorceress, but now, as she stood on the pavement looking up at the sign, her companions detected a little hesitancy in her manner.

"Oh, Marion! You are not going to back out, are you?" asked Miss Ellis, the *ingénue* of the company. "I'm just dying to know what my fortune is to be. Let me see. I want her to tell me exactly how soon Bert and I will be married, and if his father is going to give his consent, and if he will always be as lovely as he is just now, and, oh, a lot of other things that I can only ask her in confidence!"

Her two friends laughed at her earnest manner, but Bert was negotiating terms with the Kansas "galoot," as he called him, so he did not hear his sweetheart's longings.

"Of course, Bert will always be lovely! Why, shouldn't he be?" said Marion, sweetly. "Bert has the best disposition of any fellow in the world, only I almost think that he is a little fickle. Why, just think, up to a month ago, he declared that he loved no one but me, and now—well, I might die of a broken heart for all he cares! You have eclipsed me entirely, Miss Ellis, and yet I am not jealous."

She was smiling gayly as she spoke, and there was a merry twinkle in her eye, and, as Miss Ellis answered her, she smiled back tenderly.

"He loves you yet, Marion! I am sure he does," she said, stoutly; "only, of course, the love is different from that he feels for me! I expect he looks upon you more as a sister than anything else, and, anyhow, your disposition is too sweet to ever get jealous."

"I don't know," replied Marion, with a shake of her head, "I fancy if I were really in love, I should be very jealous; still, I should try to be reasonable and argue it out. If a man gives you reason to be jealous of him, it is pretty certain that he does not love you, and, of course, when you realize that, your self-respect comes to your aid. I should feel pretty badly for awhile, but I think I should conquer it."

"Well, I'm no fortune teller, Marion, but I predict that no man will ever give you cause for jealousy," spoke up Alma Allyn, the third young lady in the party. "You are the prettiest girl in the world, for one thing, and the man who would prefer any one else to you would be a fit subject for a dime museum, in my opinion."

"Oh, Alma! What a flatterer you are!" cried Marion. "If I didn't know that in your love for me you were blind to my faults, I should really get out of patience with some of your compliments."

"There! those prehistoric, antediluvian nags are provided for at last!" called Bert, as he joined them; "and, what do you think, girls! I had hard work to make that church steeple take a quarter for his trouble! He's as honest as he is tall, and, say, if what he tells me is true, you'd better give Madam Zhangara the 'go by!' She's a corker on reading fates—a regular oracle. He says she has X-ray eyes that can see right through you! She can tell what you have done ever since you were born, and what you are going to do in the future, and, at the same time, she can calculate to a fraction how far your dinner has digested! You don't catch me in the presence of such a witch! I'll go over to the restaurant and order something for myself, for I'm dead sure you won't be hungry when you escape from her clutches! If any of you are to murdered she's sure to tell you!"

"Oh, Bert; what a cheerful companion you are," laughed Marion, gayly. "I don't believe she is so wonderful; but if she is, it's all the better. I shall be very glad indeed to know what is coming! Perhaps forewarned will be forearmed; it certainly should be."

"I wouldn't miss seeing her for the world, now," said Alma Allyn. "There's nothing to see over here but stock yards and railroad tracks, so come on, girls! We'll tempt fate and learn the worst! But don't fool yourself,

Bert; it won't destroy my appetite. Just order a rousing dinner for four, and we'll join you in an hour, as I see the sign says 'fifteen minute sittings.'"

"Good-by girls! Your merriment doth not mislead me!" muttered the young man, tragically. "Methinks I see the end of all this. I shall be greeted an hour hence with glassy eyes and sepulchral whispers!"

He darted across the street as he spoke, and vanished into the restaurant, and, a minute later, the three light-hearted young girls were ushered into the waiting-room just outside of the fortune teller's private sanctum.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORTUNES.

"Oh, girls! What did she tell you? I am so glad I went. I don't know what to do!" cried Miss Ellis, as she joined her friends again an hour later, and all started across the street toward the restaurant. Marion's lips had grown pale, but she tried to smile bravely, and, before either could answer, the *ingénue* was running on merrily: "She told me I was to be happily married in less than a year, and that my husband was handsome and true and wealthy! Of course, I knew all that, but still, I was glad to have her say so, and, oh! she said I was to have a great sensation in my life—something strange and thrilling! Some one is to plot treachery against one of my friends, and I am to expose it! Really, I can almost feel myself a heroine already! It is a delightful sensation, Marion, but then, you are used to it."

"And I am not to marry the man I love," said Miss Allyn, smilingly. "But I am to marry another whose name I do not know. He is to appear very soon and fall in love with me over the footlights! Now, isn't that absurd! As if I could ever love any man but Henry!"

They had reached the restaurant now, and as they entered and saw Bert they all burst out laughing.

The look of relief upon his face was perfectly comical when he saw that they had apparently returned exactly as they had left him.

"What! not a glassy eye, nor a pallid cheek? Why, what has happened? Was the oracle dumfounded? Did you queer the old lady so that she couldn't juggle the planets, or did you queer the planets so they juggled the old lady?"

"We didn't influence either the oracle or the planets, I am sure of that!" was Miss Allyn's answer. "Really, Bert, she is a wonderful old lady. Her eyes are as black as coal, and her hair is white. She gave me quite a start when I first caught sight of her."

"And did she go into a trance?" asked Bert, as the waiter began serving the dinner.

Miss Allyn was busy with a piece of roast beef, so Miss Ellis answered:

"She went into something, but I think it was a library," she said, very demurely, "and she brought out a big book and a couple of charts, and then she did a little figuring over the day I was born, and then she told me you were the dearest, sweetest man that ever lived, and——"

"Humph! You knew that before without her telling you! Did she tell you how the governor was going to take my proposition—the one I wrote him of from Omaha just after I popped the question? If she settled that little matter I'll go back and give her another dollar, for, between you and me, I'm getting as thin as a shadow from worrying over it."

"A one-hundred-and-sixty-five-pound shadow is a pretty substantial one, Bert," laughed his sweetheart, merrily, and then, as something suddenly occurred to her, she turned and looked at Marion. "Oh, I forgot to ask what Madam Zhangara told you, Mar-

ion! Do tell us, quick! I hope it was something nice! Which did she say you would marry, Archie Ray or the doctor?"

"Dear me! As if she was restricted to those two!" broke in Miss Allyn. "Why, she has a dozen others, at least, to choose from! There's Howard Everett and Mr. Temple, and——"

"Pshaw! There don't any one stand a ghost of a chance but Archie Ray and Dr. Brookes!" persisted Miss Ellis. "Mr. Ray was Marion's first love, when she came from the country to the city, and I know she has a tender spot in her heart for him, and, as for the doctor, well, if she doesn't love him some day I shall miss my guess! Why, it isn't in human nature for her to always be indifferent to the doctor."

They were all looking at her now, and Marion's face was scarlet. She knew that they were only in fun, but it was very embarrassing just the same to have them teasing her about her lovers.

"By the way, I hope the doctor is successful in his errand to-day," broke in Bert, who was beginning to feel a little sorry for her. "He wouldn't come on this drive because he had something on hand on the Missouri side, and all-fired mysterious about it he was, too! I sincerely hope he isn't plotting to level any of the hills of the city! He's a born philanthropist, but that would be the limit."

Marion looked at him gratefully, and then tried to speak, but Miss Ellis was by far too mischievous to let her.

"Oh, I know what the doctor is doing, or, at least, I can guess!" she cried, excitedly. "He is on the warpath for a marriage license, just as like as not! There was something about that in my palm; the gypsy said I was to be present at a wedding within a very short time, and the bride was to be very dear friend, only she was to be a blonde and Marion does not answer to that description!"

Marion recovered her voice as well as her spirits, and her musical laugh rippled out as she answered:

"I suppose I could bleach my hair to accommodate the seeress, if it was necessary. I'm sure I would like to see your nice fortune come true. Really, she succeeded in making you very happy, didn't she?"

"And you have had the blues ever since you came out, Marion," said Miss Allyn, leaning toward her. "I saw in a minute that she had told you something unpleasant, but don't let it worry you, dearie—you know the whole thing is perfectly silly."

"I am not so sure," was Marion's extraordinary answer. Then, as she saw their surprised looks, she added, quickly:

"I don't mean that I believe in all of her gibberish, Alma, but there were two or three things that were really wonderful. Wait until we have finished dinner and I will tell you all I can remember."

"I'm not so sure I wish to hear it," said her friend, with a grimace. "Really, girlie, you have given me cold shivers up my spine! Dear me! I wouldn't have let you go in there for the world, if I had thought you were going to believe her! Why, the whole thing is mere fol-de-rol! What can she possibly know of your future?"

Marion took a drink of water from her glass, and then gave them each a timid look.

"Listen!" she said, softly. "I will tell you what she said. When I have finished, you can tell me if you think I have any reason to be unhappy."

CHAPTER III.

NEWS.

"What did you think of it, Alma?" Miss Ellis asked softly, as they were alone in Miss Allyn's dressing room in the principal theatre in Kansas City, a few hours later.

Then she continued.

"I did not like to express my opinion then, because Marion was so blue, but I can't wait any longer. I want to know your opinion of that future."

Miss Allyn was just "making up" her face, and she gazed in the glass reflectively before replying.

"I think it is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard," she said, very soberly, "and the strangest thing of all is that the old dame said it could not be averted. It is bound to come, no matter what we do! Now, what in the world is the good of a prophecy like that? Forewarned is evidently not forearmed on this occasion."

"She said it would be an accident," went on Miss Ellis, more soberly, "and it is to happen at the most unexpected minute. Marion is to escape with her life—well, that is a blessing! A woman could hardly say anything worse and expect a dollar for saying it."

Miss Allyn laid aside her "make-up" box and began putting on her costume, and, just then, Marion and Mrs. Burnside, the "first old lady" of the company, came into the dressing-room. "Did you enjoy your drive?" she began, pleasantly. "I've been told there's nothing to see on the Kansas side, and yet you were gone three whole hours, if you were a minute, and how that baby of mine did miss you! Really, Marion, I believe both Jackets and little Ruby look upon you as a second mother! Ida and myself are just a little bit jealous, and yet I'm not so sure that I blame the darlings!"

"We might have taken them, only the horses did look so lean and miserable," laughed Marion; "we dreaded to add another pound to their burden. You see, Bert engaged the team on the Kansas side. I am sure he would have done better right here in Missouri."

"Well, they carried us safely, and that was all we expected of them," said Miss Allyn, as she helped Marion arrange her beautiful hair as deftly as a hairdresser; "but, do you know, that 'Kansas galoot,' as Bert called him, interested me greatly. He did look green, and yet there was something shrewd in his features. I wonder if I would know him again if I should see him."

Miss Ellis burst out into a hearty laugh.

"Ever since you have been engaged to a detective you have been growing suspicious, Alma! You must be desperately in love—that's all I've got to say about it!"

"Well, who said I wasn't?" asked Miss Allyn, honestly, "and, between you and me, while I despise the profession, I can't help thinking that I have a little of the sleuth instinct."

"Marion has lots of it," broke in Mrs. Burnside, quickly. "I've heard no end of things about her cleverness!"

"All exaggerated, probably," was Marion's smiling answer. "My friends are always so ready to credit me with cleverness."

"They don't call you one bit smarter or prettier than you are, dearie," said her friend, Miss Allyn, "so you have a right to be conceited, if you wish!"

"I hope I would never be that! I abominate conceit," said the young girl, flushing.

"Some news for you, young ladies," called out a pleasant voice, and Ida Inez came into the dressing-room, holding out a newspaper.

"Now, what has happened?" cried Miss Allyn, a little anxiously.

Miss Ellis sprang upon a trunk to make more room for the others in the little cubby-hole, and just then she heard a familiar step in the hallway.

"Come in, Dr. Brookes!" she called out, merrily. "We are about to have some news! Don't you wish to share it?"

Miss Allyn had completed her toilet, so she opened the door and admitted the handsome leading-man of the company.

Bert and Orwin Olcott, the "villain," were right behind, and, before Ida Inez had fairly begun reading, Mr. Temple, the manager, was standing in the doorway.

"Now, pay attention, all of you," began the soubrette, when the manager interrupted her:

"Cut it short, please, Ida. It is almost time for the orchestra to begin and you know how our audience acted last night when we rung up five minutes late: they hissed and whistled, and yelled like Indians! I wouldn't hear such a beldam as that again for a fortune, if I could help it."

"Well, you'll hear more to-night or to-morrow night or some other night," broke in Ida Inez, promptly, "but, as I haven't time to read it, I'll tell you what it is—Commodore Dickson's friends have heard that Marion is playing this week in Kansas, and this paper says that a lot of them, mounted on ponies and bronchos, who have been prospecting in Colorado, are on their way to Topeka. They are coming to see the beautiful actress that the richest man in Arizona wanted to marry!"

Marion gave a little cry, both of astonishment and dismay, but Bert let out a war-whoop that awoke the echoes in the theatre.

"Gee whiz! Suppose they are all as big as the commodore! Why, there ain't a house in Kansas that will hold them! We'll have to build an annex on the Topeka theatre the minute we get there, if that is the city where they are to see us."

"Or give an open-air performance out on the prairie," suggested Olcott. "That would be a great scheme, Temple!"

"I wonder if they are coming out of respect for the commodore or what," said Miss Allyn, slowly.

"Oh, I guess they are coming out of curiosity to see the girl that the commodore tried to corral," said Bert, quickly. "Of course, they have heard of the 'hold up' and how Marion saved his life. It is quite natural that they should wish to see her, if they are friends of the ranchman."

"It is to be hoped they are not enemies," said Dr. Brookes, gravely.

"The paper says they are 'cow-punchers,' the most of them, whatever that means," laughed Ida Inez. "The rest are 'ranchers' and 'broncho busters.'"

"That means we'll have a wild and woolly time when they arrive," laughed Dr. Brookes. "Perhaps it will be wise for us all to carry 'pops' in our boots, and it certainly won't do any harm to rehearse a war dance."

"I'm going out to buy a lariat, after the first act," said Bert, as he helped Miss Ellis down from the trunk, "and if they take me for a 'tenderfoot' they'll find themselves mistaken."

There was a crash of music in the distance, as the overture was started, and, in a second, the group in the dressing-room scattered in all directions. Ida Inez had dropped the newspaper and Marion picked it up.

As she did so, Mr. Temple stepped back and glanced at it over her shoulder.

"It will be several days before they arrive," he said, laughing. "According to this paper they are just over the border, so we'll pass them, perhaps, on the way to Denver. And, between you and me, that's as near as I care to come to them. The commodore was all right, but can you imagine a dozen of him."

Marion laughed at the thought. The commodore was an enormous man, with a voice like thunder. He had been on the train with them between St. Paul and Omaha, and his open admiration for her had entertained them greatly.

[illegible] which [illegible] that of being in a [illegible] the capital Western variety, [illegible] commodore was at Omaha, still

suffering from his wound, and she had not heard a word from him since the adventure.

It was very funny that his friends should wish to see her. The commodore must really have been badly smitten to have told them about her: but, then, of course, the account of that exciting drive had been in the Omaha papers, and there was probably a grain of curiosity mingled with their interest in her acting.

But there was no time for reflection now.

She was obliged to shake off the spell that the fortune teller had cast over her and go down to the stage, for the cat-calls were beginning.

When Marion reached the footlights she was greeted with such effusive cheers that, just for a minute, she did not understand it.

As Dr. Brookes passed her he said, in a whisper:

"That 'hold-up' ad. caught them the first night, all right: but what's the matter with our audience this evening, Marion?"

Bert was passing on the other side, and he offered an explanation in a clever undertone.

"It's the fact that she refused the richest man in Arizona! They can't make it out a little bit! You see, every one knows the commodore out here, and when the old fellow let it out that you were not to be caught by money, they——"

"Did he do that?" whispered Marion, quickly.

"Look at the Omaha *Bee*, if you don't believe it," was the answer. "Why, in an interview with the commodore the whole thing was explained, and these people think you are nothing short of a curiosity! They can't imagine a poor actress refusing such an offer!"

Marion could not reply, but she smiled very proudly. She was not the girl to let wealth influence her affections.

CHAPTER IV.

A YOUNG CULPRIT.

"Now, we will discuss that fortune again, dearie, if you don't object," said Alma Allyn, the minute the curtain fell on the first act "I can see that it has made you nervous, and I don't much wonder, after all the thrilling experiences that you have passed through. Do please go over it once more, and tell me the details; all I can seem to remember is that something dreadful is about to happen."

She wound her arm around her friend's waist as she spoke, and both started slowly toward the dressing-room, for neither was obliged to change their costumes between these acts.

Marion lowered her voice so that the stage carpenter and the scene-shifter would not overhear her as she responded to Alma's request.

"She said it would be in the nature of a calamity, but she could not tell what," she began. "Some terrible event is to take place that no one can forsee or prevent, and I am to be in great danger; but, oh, Alma, here is the part that worries me most! I did not tell it before, but you are all to be with me! Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I wish I had never seen her!"

"We were foolish to go in there; but never mind," said Alma, soothingly. "It is all guesswork, of course, so we must put it out of our heads! What could that funny old woman really know of the future?"

"Oh, Miff Marlowe! Here you are! I'se been looking everywhere for you!" called out little Ruby, the child actress, at that minute.

She came running across the scene-room holding out a letter, and, as Marion caught her up in her arms the child put one arm around her neck and hugged her energetically.

"Me loves 'oo, Miff Marlowe!" cried the little one, sweetly. "Mamma says I can love

'oo just as much as I wants to, but I mustn't love Jackets, 'cause Jackets is naughty."

"Why, what has Jackets done?" asked Marion, quickly. She was greatly interested in Jackets, who was her especial *protégé*. She had found him in St. Paul selling papers on the street, and he was such a weird little fellow that she promptly named him "the Mascot." It was through finding him that they found Ida Inez, his mother, who was by far the most satisfactory soubrette they had ever had in the company. At Marion's question little Ruby pursed up her lips.

"Jackets tried to tiss me," she said, with a pout. "He is a naughty boy. My don't love Jackets."

"Oh, I am sure he was only in fun," said Marion, with a sly look at Miss Allyn. "Jackets is a good little boy at heart, only he is very mischievous. I shall certainly scold him if he teases you, darling."

"Yes, indeed! Fairy Godmother Marion will box his ears and turn him into a woolly dog if he is naughty," said Alma, smiling; "but here comes the youngster, so he can speak for himself. Come here, young man, and report!" she called, severely.

Jackets, a bright but undersized boy of ten, came sidling up to her. He had eyes as sharp as a ferret's, and now they were twinkling merrily.

"Dat's jes loike a goil! She'd squeal if youse looked at 'er!" he said, grinning. "Wat's de row erbout, anyhow, Miss Marler? I'se ain't done nuthin'!"

"Why, Jackets, you must not try to kiss Ruby, if she doesn't wish you to! It isn't polite," said Marion, trying hard to keep sober.

"Hully gee! Did she say dat? Well, she is er peach an' no mistake! As if I'd git sweet on er infant like her! W'y, I'm er t'inkin' of payin' me addresses ter ther stoige carpenter's daughter, Miss Honorée Henriettah O'Reilly McGilligan! Dat's wat I calls er fine-soundin' name, Miss Marler; an' say! she's er la-la, an' don't youse fergit it!"

He made a face at Ruby and vanished before Marion could get hold of him; but all the way to the dressing-room they could hear him talking to the stage hands.

"He's a great favorite, isn't he, Alma?" asked Marion, as she set Ruby down at the door of her mother's dressing-room. "And to think he has never broken his promise not to steal! Why, his own mother did not believe he would keep it when he made it."

"Well, you can't blame her, for he was a terrible little thief," was the sober answer, and then the girls hurried back, for the curtain was about rising.

It was after the final curtain that Marion found time to open her letter. She gave a little cry of delight as she turned to the signature.

"It is from the commodore," she cried, joyfully, as Alma looked at her. "He doesn't say a word about his arm, but just writes to tell me that some of his old neighbors are in that party, and that they have two or three days' travel before them yet before they reach the Missouri. Oh, how sorry I am that we are obliged to disappoint them. Still, the commodore says they are coming both on business and pleasure. They are traveling on their ponies."

"How I would like to see them on the prairie!" exclaimed Miss Allyn; "but, oh, dear me, what a slow way of traveling! I am sure it would be very monotonous unless one had very good company."

"Like a certain Mr. Henry Fairfax," suggested Marion, slyly. "Own up, Alma, dear; wouldn't you like to cross the prairies on a prairie schooner with Henry?"

"Yes, Marion," responded Alma, with a jolly laugh, "it would be glorious to spend one's honeymoon that way. Still, one can't

live on love and moonlight and stars and the great, vast silence forever. One has to have potatoes and bread and things; and just think of housekeeping in a 'prairie schooner'!"

Marion burst out laughing, and Miss Ellis came running in. She was sure by the sound that Marion had recovered from her blues, and when the beautiful star was happy she made every one else happy.

"Is there anything to see at Topeka, Alma?" she asked, as she began searching for some pins. "I'm so sick of stock yards and grain elevators that I don't know what to do."

"There's a lunatic asylum and a reform school," began Miss Allyn, dryly, "and there's a capitol building, I suppose; but that is all I know about Topeka. Of course, there'll be three nights there, but that is all. It will be awfully stupid; still, the scenery is all right, they say, and——"

"And then comes prairie, and lots of it, I suppose," said Miss Ellis. "Well, anything like solitude will do for me! I'm positively used up with all the excitement that we have been through."

"We'll enjoy the scenery in Colorado, if we ever get there," went on Miss Allyn; "but, oh, how stupid it will be from Topeka to Denver! I think we leave at noon and get in at ten the next morning."

"We'll vary the programme a little, Alma," called out Bert, as he passed the door. "I mean to chum in with the engineer when we leave Topeka; then, hurrah for a ride across the prairie on the engine!"

"Oh, that will be jolly!" cried Miss Ellis, clapping her hands. "I have always wanted to ride on a locomotive!"

"I have ridden on them, and it is great," laughed Alma, as she twisted some roses in Marion's hair; "only, whenever I am in the cab, I can't keep my hands off the throttle. I seem possessed with a desire to run the engine!"

"Oh, that's nothing! You women have a mania for running everything," laughed Bert. "Why shouldn't you try your hand at running an engine?"

"Oh, Alma! That reminds me of something!" cried Marion, suddenly. "That fortune teller told me I had great mechanical ability, and that it was lucky I had a cool head and a steady hand, for I should need both badly in the coming emergency."

The laughter had left her face, and for a minute all were silent. The ominous gloom had again fallen upon them, and it was only dispelled by Mr. Temple calling to them to all come out and have some supper.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW APPLICANT FOR THESPIAN HONORS.

The moment Marion opened her eyes the next morning she asked for the morning paper, but she could not find a word about the whereabouts of her Arizona admirers.

"I would so like to keep track of them; but, of course, that is impossible," she said to Alma. "Some way, I feel interested in the commodore's neighbors, and I do hope they will make their journey safely."

"Why, what is to harm them?" asked Miss Allyn, quickly. "Of course, there might be a cyclone, but that is hardly probable in this weather. Oh, I am sure we will hear from them somewhere in Colorado—that is, if we don't go up in a cyclone ourselves before we escape from their native haunts. There are no storm cellars on the train, so we'll have to take our chances."

"I've heard of trains being blown from the track; but it seems incredible, doesn't it, Alma? I do hope that is not the calamity that is about to befall us!"

"Oh, Marion! do put that nonsense out of your head! I really believe you are getting

morbid!" said Alma, anxiously. "You are too sensible a girl to brood over that! Why, I am as good a prophetess as Madam Zhaungara, and I predict that we have a glorious ride across Kansas and enjoy every moment in its beautiful climate!"

"I certainly hope so, and I will not speak of that fortune teller again," said Marion, decidedly. "Just order some breakfast for me, Alma, and I'll hurry and dress, and, the moment I have had my coffee, I shall write to the commodore. I am really anxious to hear how his arm is doing, and I must thank him for telling me about the interest his neighbors are taking in me. The bluff old ranchman must have written to some of them about me."

"He didn't have to write!" laughed Miss Allyn, gayly. "He had only to open his mouth and roar out his information, and that voice would echo from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I doubt if even the Rocky Mountains would stop it."

"It was an honest voice if it was big," said Marion, as she began to dress. "A great, monstrous, manly voice that wasn't afraid of anything. Do you know, Alma, he was what I would call a mental, moral and physical giant."

"You might have added 'financial,'" said Alma, smiling. "I guess there's no doubt that he is the biggest man in his State in every way; but listen, dearie, there is Jackets calling you."

Marion ran to the door and opened it a crack. The mascot was standing there with a little bunch of faded roses.

"Oh, Jackets! where did you get those?" asked Marion, sweetly.

Jackets hung his head, but his voice was as firm as ever.

"A feller wot wuz er cross 'tween er Injun an' er giant give 'em ter me las' night," he began glibly, but there was something about his manner that made Marion suspicious.

"Who was he?" she asked, as she tried to grab the boy by the collar. Jackets ducked his head and eluded her grasp; then he burst out in a peal of shrill, childish laughter.

"You'd orter of seed him, Miss Marler," he piped. "He wuz er dead game sport, I don't t'ink! He gimme ther posies an' er nickel—t'ink er dat! A hull nickel fer deliverin' his bokay to er loidy!"

"And you delivered them this morning, after they were wilted," laughed Marion. "Well, I guess that serves him right for sending flowers to a stranger. I don't know any one in Kansas City that I care to accept them from, unless it is over the footlights, as a tribute to my playing."

"Dat's kerzactly wot I told him!" remarked Jackets, as she finished; "only, I didn't use them identikle langwich. I tole him he wuz er bloomin' chump ter t'ink youse 'ud want his ole turnip-tops; an' say, youse orter of seen de look he gimme! If I'se hadn't er lit out ther jay would er smashed me!"

Marion and Miss Allyn both laughed heartily as the boy ran away. There was no understanding or accounting for Jackets.

"Are you ready for rehearsal?" asked Mrs. Burnside, putting her head inside the doorway, a few minutes later. "Mr. Temple says we must swallow our coffee red-hot this morning. He wishes to try the new piece that we are to play in Topeka, and, as both of the children will be in it, we shall need extra rehearsing."

Marion and Miss Allyn both joined her and hurried through their breakfasts. It was nearly eleven o'clock, and at twelve they were at the rehearsal

"I've watched the papers all day, but I haven't seen another word about the cowboys. I suppose they are lost in the vastness of space, and that we won't hear of them for days," said Marion to Alma, just before the beginning of the evening performance.

"I've watched, too," was the reply; "but I guess it is just as you say. They are swallowed up by the rolling prairies and enveloped in silence."

"We'll be a little nearer them at Topeka—that is one thing," remarked Miss Ellis; "and that is about the only thing that is cheering my drooping spirits. I am positively yearning for a glimpse of a genuine 'bronchobuster'!"

"Well, here's a pretty fair sample of one," called Bert, at that minute. The girls had been standing in the scene-room, and all turned quickly as he spoke.

"Just take a look at this specimen! He is genuine, I reckon!" he went on, excitedly. "Now, how the deuce did you get in here, mister? Did you tomahawk the doorkeeper or lasso the manager? You look as if you might do almost anything that you undertook to do!"

The individual addressed grinned good-naturedly at his question. He was a young man, not over twenty-five, very tall and muscular and dressed in the regulation costume of the cowboys in the Rockies. He had on buckskin leggings and trousers and a red flannel shirt, while his belt looked like an arsenal, it was stuck so full of pistols.

"He wants to see the manager," explained the doorkeeper, who was close behind him. "Now, you wouldn't expect me to try and stop an infernal machine like that, would you, Mr. Jackson? Why, he'd have plugged me full of holes if I had ever refused him."

"Not ther least danger, boss! This hyar belt is as empty as er prairie grave!" drawled the new-comer, pleasantly. "Ther shootin' irons is all thar, but ther ain't no stuff ter load with. Ef I toted both, I'd be corralled by ther authorities."

"Well, they'd have my blessing when they undertook the job," laughed Bert. "I'd tackle a buffalo bull or a cinnamon bear, but excuse me from being on earth when you get to work with those weapons."

"I reckon I kin shoot purty straight," said the stranger, grinning, and just at that minute Mr. Temple came up to him.

"Did you wish to speak to me?" began the manager, politely.

The fellow pulled off his sombrero and made an awkward bow.

"I reckon I do," he said, with another grin. "I reckon I want a job with you, boss. I'm just hankerin' for ther chance ter be a play-actor."

Every one held their breath for a second; then some one gave a tug at Marion's dress.

She looked down just as Jackets whispered shrilly in her ear:

"Dat's him, Miss Marler! Dat's de Injun dude wot gimme de nickel! Wot do youse t'ink er him? Ain't he de limit?"

CHAPTER VI.

A SUSPICION.

Marion could not wait to hear Mr. Temple's decision, for she had to hurry to her dressing-room, so as not to delay the rising of the curtain.

When the performance was over, and she and Alma were busily packing their theatrical trunks in the dressing-room, Bert gave a loud rap on their door, and then fairly roared with laughter.

"What do you think? Mr. Temple has engaged him!" he cried, as Alma sprang to open the door for him. "He's got a magnificent voice, and can do stunts galore. He's going to use him in the rescue scene in the new play. He's so much bigger than the other 'supes' that he'll show off to good advantage, and, besides, he can drag Marion from her watery grave and toss her ashore just as though she was a feather. He's as strong as a buffalo, and he is really very tame! You just ought to see him melt when he talks of Marion."

"Another conquest, dearie," laughed Alma, mischievously. "Now, what in the world will Mr. Temple do with him between the acts? There's no room for him behind the scenes, and the dressing-rooms won't hold him."

"Exactly what I suggested," said Dr. Brookes, coming in; "but Mr. Temple is delighted with him, and he is planning something. I believe he is yearning for a male quartette, and the cow-puncher sings a magnificent basso."

Marion clapped her hands with delight at the suggestion.

"Why not have a cowboy chorus in one of the scenes?" she asked, quickly. "The new play is just wild and picturesque enough to admit of it nicely! Alma and I can be Indian maidens and little Ruby and Jackets can be papooses!"

"A great scheme!" laughed Mr. Temple, who was just passing the door. "That would go beautifully in New York, but it isn't novelty enough out here; but come, ladies, we must hurry a little. The lights are going out. Here's the watchman to lock up. Is everything ready?"

"All ready," was the answer, as the company tramped out.

The next morning early they were on their way to Topeka.

Marion and Alma sat together, and, as the train drew out, they began talking quietly of the new member of their company.

"So he is the one that sent the posies," murmured Marion, smilingly.

"It doesn't seem possible that he can be civilized enough for that. Still, all men, wild and tame, love flowers, I believe."

"Yes, and the wilder they are the closer they cling to nature, I fancy," was the answer. "The Indians were good botanists in their own peculiar way, and I have no doubt the worst desperado in the Rocky Mountains has an intimate acquaintance with the flora of his country."

"I would like so much to see him again," was Marion's next remark. "It seems a little risky to take such a perfect stranger into the company; still, I have a reason, which I cannot mention, for thinking that the 'cowboy' is all right."

She smiled a little wistfully at her friend as she spoke, and Alma understood at once. There was a ring of genuine surprise in her tones as she asked the next question:

"You don't mean to say that the fortune teller mentioned him!" she cried, sharply. "Why, Marion, if that is the case, it is really extraordinary!"

"She mentioned a 'child of nature' who would soon cross my path," answered Marion, softly. "She said he was rough, but brave and true, and that I could lean on him with safety in the coming emergency."

"Well, if that don't beat all!" said Alma, wonderingly; then her face suddenly lighted up and she burst out laughing.

"It is a put-up job! I begin to see through it, Marion!" she said, quickly. "This fellow is the same long, lanky 'galoot' that held Bert's horses over in Kansas City, Kansas! Oh, I'm no detective, girlie, but I'm a rattling good guesser!"

Marion's eyes flew open as she stared at her friend thoughtfully.

"You may be right, Alma. He does look like that fellow, doesn't he? Only the buckskin trousers and loose shirt make him look several sizes larger."

"I am sure it is he," said Alma, more calmly. "He was probably stage-struck or star struck, or something on that order, and, no doubt, he found some way of posting the old lady, for, of course, he had been to the theatre and identified us instantly."

Alma little realized how near she had come to the truth. As a matter of fact, the fortune teller had got some valuable points from him.

"We must ask Bert," began Marion, and just then Mr. Temple joined them. He had been sitting in the smoker, talking with his new actor.

"Well, ladies," he exclaimed, laughingly, "I've got a surprise for you. My advance agent has booked us for Salt Lake City after our tour of Colorado."

"Has he?" asked Marion, gayly. "I shall dread going out among the Mormons."

"Why, Marion, I expect you will make history while you are there!" laughed Miss Allyn, mischievously. "Of course, the Mormon elders will all fall in love with you, if they are true to their reputations; and just think what an experience it would be to find yourself the affinity of a dozen or so of the gray-bearded old fellows—at least, I suppose they wear gray beards; they all do in pictures, on the style of the patriarchs or ancient Druids. Why, you will break all records; I am sure of it, Marion! They will come to the theatre, see, and be conquered, and, of course, they'll want you for a plural wife, or whatever they call them!"

Marion tried to smile, but the thought was disgusting. She had heard something of the Mormons, but had never seen one.

"I suppose they call them by numbers," went on Miss Allyn, laughing. "Well, there are arguments in favor of polygamy, I suppose; but I'll know more about the success of such an institution after I have left Utah, I fancy."

"I am sure it must be very disgusting," said Marion, slowly; "but how is our new recruit progressing, Mr. Temple?"

The manager looked serious as he answered:

"It is a rash experiment, of course," he said, as he stroked his mustache thoughtfully; "but I was so impressed with his physique, inasmuch as we really need a large man in this particular production, and his voice simply charmed me. He is a magnificent singer! His basso will go beautifully with the doctor's tenor, and, you know, I fully intend to introduce a little music into our future productions."

He glanced at Marion meaningly, and the young girl blushed. She was the owner of a superb voice and had sung in public several times, and, quite naturally, the manager thought it would delight their audiences to hear her.

"We shall rehearse as soon as we reach Topeka," he continued; "and, just as soon as the songs are thoroughly learned, I fully expect to astonish the natives."

"How long a contract have you given the new actor?" asked Marion, smiling.

"It had to be short, necessarily, as we have only a few more dates to play," was the manager's rather mournful answer. "But what do you think? The fellow did not want any salary. He said he was willing to go with us 'for the fun of the thing:' but it is my impression that he is very ambitious. I fancy he hopes to impress a certain young lady in the company." A sly glance at Marion accompanied the words, but the fair young girl only laughed as though it were sheer nonsense.

A moment later the other members of the company came into the car, all but the "cowboy," who preferred to remain in the smoker.

"I can't quite understand him," said Dr. Brookes, thoughtfully. "At any rate, I shall be glad when we arrive at Topeka."

"So shall I, Doc.," said Bert, with a grimace; "but, now I come to think of it, I fancy we were a bit hasty. We may have shipped a cutthroat in order to get a singer."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIGNAL FROM THE STAGE.

But the run to Topeka was made in safety, and the "cowboy chorus" at the first performance made a decided hit. Such a quartette of male voices could hardly be equaled.

"Now, what in the world are they yelling for?" asked Bert, after the curtain fell. "We've sung 'The Old Oaken Bucket' and 'Home, Sweet Home.' Isn't that enough to expect of such artists as we are? Why, I'll demand a raise of salary if we have to respond to another encore!"

"I guess you'll have to go back once more, Jackson," said the stage manager, as he listened to the applause. "Go out and sing the 'Star Spangled Banner;' that will take down the house! Hold on a minute until I ask Ajax if he knows it."

"Is that his name?" asked Bert, laughing. "I've called him Buffalo Bill and Kit Carson and Rocky Mountain Pete, and he answers to one just as well as to the other."

"It's the only thing I can think of when I look at him," was the answer; and then the cheering grew so loud that the stage manager became desperate.

"Something has to be done!" he said, as he turned to look for Ajax.

"I'll sing 'The Star Spangled Banner,' if you wish," said a sweet voice at his side, and Marion swept on the stage in her favorite snow-white costume, with her hair bound down by white bands in the beautiful Grecian fashion.

Mr. Deering gave her a grateful look and then ordered the stage cleared. The next minute the curtain was rung up and Marion stood alone in the center of the stage, looking almost like a statue carved from Carrara marble.

The audience was silent in an instant, but they were just a little disappointed. They hated to have the play proceed until they had heard some more singing.

There was a sign to the orchestra leader, and the musicians all raised their instruments. The next moment Marion's magnificent voice fairly flooded the house with melody. It was a complete surprise, and the whole audience sat spellbound.

As she sang, the entire company grouped themselves in the wings, and suddenly Miss Ellis leaned over and whispered in Bert's ear:

"Quick! Look at him, Bert! The cowboy, I mean! Did you ever see such an expression of admiration? I believe that fellow is in love with Marion!"

"I'm sure of it," was Bert's answer, as he glanced sharply at the man. "I've seen him watching her a dozen times, and I know he carries one of those big poster pictures of her in his pocket. He looks good-natured, all right, but see how his eyes are shining! I give you my word, I wouldn't want him for a rival."

"Dear me, I hope it won't come to that!" whispered Alma Allyn, who was standing near them. "Still, he is safer now than he was when he joined the company. He's discarded his belt, but his hip-pocket still bulges suspiciously."

"I'll have to investigate that hip-pocket," said Bert, under his breath. "It was bad enough to have a man around who was decorated with empty pistols, but concealed weapons are quite another thing. A fellow can't be sure whether they are loaded or not, and I am not in the mood for taking any chances."

Marion's last note was just dying out and the curtain was falling.

"What is puzzling me now," muttered Bert, to himself, "is, why did Ajax choose this time to yearn to become an actor? I can't help thinking that Thespian honors were not his only motive."

"We all think that he is in love with Marion," said Miss Ellis, slyly, as a perfect roar of applause fairly shook the place where they were standing.

Dr. Brookes looked across the stage toward the opposite wings, where the cowboy was

standing, and for a minute he stared blankly at the fellow's expression.

Marion was obliged to take a curtain call, and finally an encore, but, all the time she was singing, Dr. Brookes watched Ajax intently.

"She has completely infatuated him," he said, finally, as he approached Miss Ellis. "He is looking at her this minute as if he wanted to eat her. I'll watch him a bit more carefully, Miss Ellis, for we can't spare our Marion."

He tried to speak jokingly, but there was a serious ring in his voice, for while it was not possible for him to feel jealous of such a rival, still, he did feel anxious for Marion's safety and happiness.

"Well, he is certainly a good singer," said the *ingénue*, turning away, "and if that Madam Zhangara told the truth, he must be brave and loyal, for he is certainly the 'child of nature' that she saw in Marion's fortune."

Dr. Brookes laughed genuinely now, for he had heard about the fortune, and he was by far too sensible to give a serious thought to it.

"When will girls and women stop consulting the oracle?" he asked, jokingly. "Why, I really believe it is a feminine trait to wish to peer into the unseeable. I suppose it is another form of feminine curiosity."

"Or caution," corrected Miss Ellis, with a reproving frown. "We are trying to get fore-armed, so that we can provide against emergencies. Now, if Marion had consulted a fortune teller before she started on the road, she might have protected herself against all her terrible experiences!"

She laughed gayly as she spoke, for she was only jesting, and, just at that minute, the curtain fell again, and Marion came running from the stage, her round cheeks flushed with victory.

"It was superb, dearie. I never heard you sing better," cried Miss Allyn, putting her arm around her.

"The cowboy quartette is out of it completely! It isn't one, two, three in the race with you, Marion!" chimed in Bert.

"We shall only play pieces in future where we can introduce music," added Mr. Temple, who had come behind the scenes while she was singing. "I am confident that your singing alone would fill any theatre."

Dr. Brookes was about to add his word of praise, but the orchestra stopped just at that moment, and the bell tinkled its summons to raise the curtain.

Every one scurried away except Miss Allyn and Orrin Olcott, who were obliged to go right on, and then Dr. Brookes moved slowly across the scene-room.

A moment later he caught sight of Ajax still standing in the wings, and a second later he saw him signal to some one in the audience.

It was only a movement of the head, but it was enough for the doctor.

As he flashed a lightning-like glance across the sea of faces he saw a coarse-looking fellow rise suddenly and leave the theatre.

Dr. Brookes drew back quickly, and in a moment Ajax sauntered across the scene-room. As he passed the doorkeeper he offered him a chew of tobacco, then slouched out of the stage door and disappeared in the darkness. Dr. Brookes would have followed him if he could, but he heard his cue at that instant. As he hurried on to the stage he felt sorely perplexed. The new member of the company was a mysterious person.

As Ajax turned the corner he was joined by the coarse-looking stranger.

"Is it all right?" were the stranger's first words.

"The luckiest deal we ever made," replied Ajax.

"Good! When do we start?"

"Ten-thirty, Thursday morning."

It certainly had been a lucky deal.

As it happened, large sums of money were being carried daily on the through trains to the West.

At the time Ajax had joined the company he was in a plot to rob one of the through trains at a lonely spot on the prairie.

His infatuation for Marion had nearly spoiled the scheme.

And now it turned out that the company was to travel on the very train on which a larger sum than usual was to be carried.

Marion was never told how much Madam Zhangara knew of the plot. If she had, she would not have been so much mystified by her strange fortune.

CHAPTER VIII.

AJAX ASTONISHES THE DOCTOR.

On the road again!

The company had finished its engagement at Topeka and was now being whirled as fast as steam could take it toward Denver and the Rockies.

The ladies were seated in one end of the day coach, except Miss Allyn, who was taking in the view from the rear of the train, while the men had retired to the smoker.

As the train pulled out of one of the stations Mr. Temple burst into the car holding a yellow slip of paper in his hands.

"Here's a pretty mess," were his first words, as he handed Marion a telegram that he had received at that station. "My advance agent wires me that our theatre in Denver was nearly burned to the ground. That throws us out of our week's engagement."

"What a pity!" cried Marion, turning a trifle pale. "Now, where will we go next, Mr. Temple?"

There was a whoop of joy as Bert Jackson came flying into the car, waving a long dispatch that had been forwarded to him from his father.

"Gee whiz, Temple! Just listen to this!" he cried, delightedly. "That fire at Denver comes just in the nick of time, for dad is to have a special car meet us at Pueblo to hustle us all back to Washington for the President's inauguration! He was going to have you cancel our engagement at Denver and some other places!"

Marion and Miss Allyn stared at him in wonder, and then Marion clapped her hands at the delightful prospect.

"Oh, how perfectly glorious!" she cried, happily. "What a dear, good man Mr. Hobart Canfield is, Bert! And how proud you must be of such a thoughtful father!"

"We can go all right, can't we, old man?" asked Bert, turning to the manager.

Mr. Temple did a little figuring in a notebook, and a relieved look passed over his features.

"It can be done, all right, I am sure," was his answer. "Denver is out of it, anyway, and the next week was 'one-night stands' that I don't mind canceling one bit. Yes, we'll go to Washington, Bert, thanks to the captain, and then for a long ride back to Salt Lake City!"

"Oh, that won't bother us any when we own the train!" said Bert, loftily. "I tell you, a railroad president is the biggest kind of a gun! Now, what wouldn't I give if the governor would change his mind and let me follow in his footsteps, instead of being a minister!"

The young man's face was so serious that his friends all laughed. It always struck them as being highly amusing when Bert talked of being a minister.

"I'll wire the advance agent both at Denver and Salt Lake City," said Mr. Temple, thoughtfully, "and I'm sure we will not be

much out of pocket by the new order of our going."

"No more acting until after the President has been seen, heard and congratulated! Isn't that just out of sight?" shouted Bert, as Miss Allyn came through from the observation car.

Miss Allyn looked at him in amazement.

Things were quickly explained to her, and she was as happy as the rest.

"It doesn't seem possible that we shall be flying East so soon," was Miss Allyn's answer, after she had learned the news. "I do hope, Bert, that your father will be in Washington when we get there. I would like to thank him personally for this pleasant experience which he is about to give us."

"He's in Denver, and can't possibly get back until too late for us to see him," said Bert, mournfully. "It seems that the Canfields live in Denver. They are the people who adopted him when he was a kid, just as he adopted me. That's how he comes by the name of Dunlap Hobart-Canfield."

"Was he a poor boy, too?" asked Marion, eagerly.

Bert nodded his head.

"Poor as a church mouse," he said, grinning. "They took him and brought him up, and then some one died and left him some money. After the war he invested it and made a pile, and that's how he came to get into the railroad business."

"Perhaps you will follow in his footsteps in time, Bert, just as you wish," said Miss Allyn, seriously. "I can understand now why he took such a fancy to you. Well, I don't wish to flatter you, but the captain showed good taste. Why, if he had adopted me, he would not have done better!"

There was a general laugh from the other members of the company, who had all managed to get seats pretty close together.

"Aren't we nice and cozy here?" asked Miss Ellis, as she glanced around the car. "We are all together, so we can play cards or be sociable. Let's see, how many are there of us? I'll have to count noses!"

Little Ruby clapped her hand over her fat little nose with a delighted giggle. She was very much amused at the idea of having her nose counted.

Jackets was in the seat with his mother, and he promptly made a face at her, for, in spite of his mother's rebukes and Marion's pleadings, he had not yet found the grace in his soul to make up with her.

The gentlemen of the company were now all in seats together, but the new recruit preserved a curious silence.

"I say, Marion," whispered Bert, over her shoulder, "you have rattled Ajax! I can't get him to go back into the smoker. I have suggested it twice, and so has Mr. Temple; but there he sits like a log. Now, that's a conquest for fair, when you can take a man like Ajax away from his corncob."

Marion laughed pleasantly, but she did not glance in the cowboy's direction, for she had already done so twice, and each time he was staring straight at her.

"It is a case of silent admiration," whispered Miss Ellis, mischievously. "Oh, Bert! why don't you learn to worship me in that mutely eloquent way instead of gushing such volumes of tender sentiments all over me?"

"Great Cæsar's ghost! what a libel!" Bert almost roared. "Marion, I turn to you to defend my reputation! Do I look like a man who would be guilty of such conduct?"

"One can never tell what a person in love will do or say," murmured Marion, slyly.

Bert turned away with a dismal groan.

"Well, I'll be blowed!" he said, with an appealing glance at Miss Allyn. "Have I no friends in this crowd? Am I utterly forsaken? That settles it. I shall fly to the engine this very minute! If you feel the

train jolting over something by and by, Marion, you will know it is my body which I have flung from the cab! I simply cannot endure life, now that I know how you regard me!"

"Oh, Bert! you are just too silly for anything!" laughed his sweetheart. Then she slipped her hand into into his in a coaxing manner.

"Take me with you, Bert! I do so want to ride on the engine! I suppose, though, we can't get up there until we stop at the next station."

"If you wish it, I will go, too," said Marion, quickly; "but I think I will like it better when we are out on the prairie! I want to run like mad through that 'boundless vastness' that Alma is always talking about. I do not wish to see a house, rock or tree when I am riding on the engine! I want to feel that I am just flying through space, without hindrance or resistance!"

"You'll feel that way, all right, for this is a very fast train," said Mr. Temple, leaning over. "They tell me also that there is considerable boodle aboard: but that does not interest me half as much as the culinary department at this minute, so I'm going to hold a conference with the waiter, if you will excuse me."

He walked down the aisle as he spoke, and Bert rose and followed him. A minute later Bob Hinton, the calcium man; Mr. Deering, the stage manager, and Orrin Olcott went into the smoker, which left no one but a "supe," Dr. Brookes and Ajax with the ladies.

Marion and Alma got out books and began to read, while both Jackets and little Ruby fell asleep on the laps of their mothers.

The train was bounding along and Miss Ellis was staring at the scenery. At the very first station Bert came in and got her, and both went out upon the platform and climbed up into the engine. The fact that Bert's father was a railroad director had worked like a charm with the engineer.

"We have corralled one passenger," remarked Dr. Brookes, as the train pulled out.

He glanced over his shoulder as he spoke and took a sharp glance at the new passenger; then he took a second look, but he did not allow what was passing in his mind to show upon his features.

The one passenger who had boarded the train was a coarse-looking fellow, and he recognized him almost instantly as the fellow he had seen Ajax making signs to in the theatre at Topeka.

A moment later Mr. Temple's words flashed into his mind.

"There was lots of boodle on the train," and it was in the express compartment. He had seen the messenger guarding his quarters with the alertness of a watchdog.

He rose from his seat and sauntered down toward the end of the car in which the newcomer was seated, but the fellow was reading a paper and did not even glance at him.

What should he do?

The question came into his mind, and, as he strolled through the train, he tried to answer it wisely.

Not a person in the car suspected anything wrong, apparently, and he began asking himself why he should entertain such suspicions. The signaling in the theatre may have been a mere matter of friendship. Still, since the new passenger entered the car, they had not even looked at each other.

He stopped in one of the vestibules and gazed out on the landscape.

It was a wild country now, and the day was mild and spring-like. He had never been in Kansas, and he was delighted with the experience. As he stood leaning against the rail he almost forgot his suspicions of Ajax.

Suddenly a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and he turned to find the "cowboy" standing close behind him.

"What in the world is the matter?" he asked, involuntarily, as he saw the look in the fellow's eyes, and, at the same time, he moved back to a safer position.

The answer astonished him so that he could hardly speak for a minute. It was the last thing in the world that he would have expected from Ajax.

"Ther's curus things in this hyar world, ain't ther, now?" said the fellow, almost solemnly. "An' ther curressest thing of all iz er purty woman. Ef er woman iz purty she kin jes undo er man kumpletely. Ther ain't no

use er fightin' agin it. Yer mought 's well give in an' knuckle under."

Dr. Brookes got his breath, but he could only repeat the same question.

"What on earth do you mean, Ajax? What the deuce is the matter?"

There was a shriek from the locomotive, and the train began slowing up.

The next minute Ajax jerked a loaded revolver from his pocket and thrust it into the doctor's hand.

"Take thet thar 'pop,' boss, an' tuck it in yer pocket! Keep yer mouth shet an' yer eyes open! Ther's sumthin' er goin' ter happen, if this hyar duck ain't allfiredly mistaken!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW ENGINEER.

Before the doctor could reply Ajax was gone and the train had slowed down at another station.

Miss Ellis and Bert came in, laughing gayly over their ride on the engine. The *ingénue's* face was black with cinders, but she had enjoyed the experience immensely.

After that the hours flew by, with the doctor growing more and more nervous. He dreaded the coming of night after the "cowboy's" ominous warning.

More than once he tried to talk with him, but it was absolutely impossible, for Ajax developed a silence that could not be broken, and the doctor did not like to mention the matter to the others until he had decided for sure that there was really occasion for anxiety.

Over and over again he strolled through the train, and at every station he got out and looked for the express messenger, and found him every time as grim and watchful as ever.

As the train pulled into the station at Hutchinson he came into the car and was greeted by an eager appeal from Marion:

"Oh, doctor! now for our ride on the engine! The conductor tells me we have a long run through open prairie!"

"But it is growing chilly," began Dr. Brookes, discouragingly. "It will be almost cold in the cab after sundown."

Marion caught up a scarf and wound it around her head.

"You can't frighten me a bit! I'm not afraid of the cold," she said, laughingly, "and, besides, I must see how the sun sets in this part of the country."

The doctor glanced at Ajax as he spoke, and was genuinely perplexed at his appearance. When the young girl insisted upon riding on the engine, the "cowboy" half rose with a startled look upon his face; then he immediately sank back, and a smile of relief crossed his features.

What it meant was a mystery, but the doctor dared not ask him. He must go on for a while longer with "his mouth shut and his eyes open," in order not to arouse needless anxiety. He led Marion out upon the platform, and then both clambered upon the engine, and in a moment more the train pulled out of the station, and they were off to the West, with Marion watching for the sunset.

"Isn't it perfectly glorious?"

The young girl uttered the words as she stood in the narrow space, her hair flying in the breeze that fairly whistled through the open windows of the cab, with Dr. Brookes and the engineer squeezed in tightly beside her.

Dr. Brookes tried to answer, but the wind caught the words and almost tore them from his lips. It was as if some madcap spirit had possession of the prairie and was making merry with their voices and laughter.

The sun was sinking in the west and the sky was glowing with color, the clear orange of the great orb melting away into pale yellow, while the heaped masses of clouds ranged from faint azure to royal purple. There was nothing to be seen but the level stretch of prairie and the railroad track that looked like a mere thread spun out to the horizon, but only visible in flashes as they dashed madly over it.

As Marion had said, she was flying through space, and, in a few moments, her attention was riveted upon the begrimed engineer, whose hand rarely left the throttle for a minute.

Bending as close to him as she could, she fairly screamed in his ear:

"Do you have to watch it every minute—

the throttle, I mean? There is surely nothing to run over out here on the prairie."

The grim engineer smiled at her as he replied:

"'Tain't allus what's ahead of us, it's what's behind," he said, pointing to the bell rope. "A jerk of that rope means to stop her, quick. Don't do ter have yer hand too far from ther throttle!"

"You mean that the conductor might signal," said Marion, a little wonderingly. "But what should make him do that when there aren't any stations?"

Dr. Brookes was thinking of the warning that Ajax had given him, so he put his lips close to Marion's ear and answered her question:

"Something might go wrong in the train. There might be robbers aboard or something like that. Suppose anything should catch on fire, they would have to stop instantly."

"Or, if any one should fall off," added the fireman, who had just crawled in from the coal bunker. "People do sometimes, you know, and we'd want ter stop fer 'em!"

Marion shuddered at his words, for the train was going like lightning. There would be little use in going back for any one who fell off at that minute.

"Do yer want ter run her, miss?" asked the engineer, suddenly.

Marion's eyes flashed joyfully, as she comprehended the question. The next moment she moved forward and put her white hand on the throttle.

"When I tell yer ter slow her down yer kin move her so," he explained, as his hand closed over Marion's; "an', ef yer want ter go faster, why, move her so!"

"Oh, I don't believe I'll ever care to go faster!" cried Marion, laughing, but she moved the lever as she was told, and then her cheeks paled a little; it was such a wonderful thing to be able to control the iron monster.

"I'd like to learn all about it," she said, as she paid strict attention to what the engineer was telling her. "It might come in handy some time, and a person can never know too much. When I have a little time, I shall certainly learn engineering."

"Yer doin' all right now," said the engineer, laughing. He had edged a little to one side, so he could look at her squarely. The young girl's beautiful hair had burst all bonds now and it was waving in lovely ringlets all over her shoulders.

Her great gray eyes were scintillating with excitement, and the flush upon her face made it exceedingly beautiful. It was almost the proudest moment of her life, and when the engineer told her to slow down a little, she did it promptly, although it was several seconds before she understood his motive.

A long line of smoke had appeared in the distance, and as the engineer resumed his hold on the throttle, he drew his train carefully over a switch, and an express from Denver thundered past them. Marion held her breath as she saw it coming, for it seemed to her that a collision was inevitable.

"'Ships that pass in the night' are not in it with that," laughed the doctor, in her ear. "Just think of it, Marion—probably there were lots of New Yorkers on board of that express. That is the way it goes—one meets one's neighbors everywhere, but, in this case, we couldn't so much as bow to them."

"They are almost out of sight now," said Marion, as she gazed after the train, then it suddenly occurred to her that her own train should be moving.

"There's something wrong, I guess," she began, but the engineer replied, briefly:

"We had er minute ter spare an' the men are lookin' at ther boxes. It's our only stop 'tween Hutchinson an' Dodge City."

"Did I gain that minute?" asked Marion, laughingly.

"I reckon you did, miss. Yer speeded her jest er little," was the answer. "An' she kin go like ther wind, ef it's a case of git thar!"

Marion gazed down from her high perch, where the engineer had again placed her, and watched the trainmen a second, then took another survey of the rolling prairie.

"Yer kin start her now, miss," said the engineer, as there came a jerk of the bell rope.

Marion grasped the throttle with a flush of pride. Once more they were off, over the wind-swept prairie, which was growing more beautiful with each passing minute.

CHAPTER X.

DANGER AHEAD.

As the train sped on over the smooth rails, Marion leaned from the window, but always with one hand resting lightly upon the throttle.

"You'd orter see ther prairie in summer, miss," said the engineer, proudly. "Later on, it'll be high er nuff ter play hide an' seek in, an' when ther wind moves it soft like, it looks jest like ther ocean."

"I should like to see it," was the young girl's answer; then once more her beautiful eyes were turned toward the horizon. "Nothing but sky," she murmured, dreamily. "Oh, doctor, how near the sun looks and yet how far, and how glorious the clouds are just on the edge of the horizon!"

Dr. Brookes bent over and shaded his eyes with his hand; then he drew a small pair of field glasses quickly from his pocket.

"Quick! Look, Marion! See that band of horsemen in the distance. Suppose they should be the commodore's friends," he said, quickly. "It certainly is a band of cowboys."

Marion seized the glasses and gazed where he pointed. She could see the moving column distinctly, like a thin, black line near the edge of the horizon.

"The commodore's neighbors," murmured the young girl, as she handed back the glass.

"What a strange coincidence it would be if we should run across our friends way out here. If they are the ones, I do hope we shall see them nearer than this; but, oh, dear, I am afraid we will not, now that we are going on to Pueblo!"

"No, we will miss them now, all right," answered the doctor, who was still gazing at them, "but they are not as far away as I thought at first. Here, engineer, take a look and tell me about when we will pass them."

The engineer took the glass and began calculating the distance, while Marion watched the track ahead as carefully as possible.

"Can't tell much in this light," said the engineer, finally. "They are creepin' toward ther railroad track, I reckon. Mebbe they'll leave their horses at Dodge City an' take ther rail ter Denver."

"And we'll be in Washington by that time! Oh, it's too bad!" cried Marion.

"It would have been such a treat to see them all, especially if they were anything like our bluff old commodore!"

The train was now sweeping through a section of the prairie that had not been visited by the usual autumn fires, and the grass still stood, tall, dry and dead, adding, if possible, to the utterly forsaken appearance of the country.

The fireman, who had been gazing at the landscape, suddenly turned back with a shudder. The tall grass had reminded him of the dangers of a prairie fire, and, in a voice scarcely audible, he muttered:

"I hope to gracious this never burns while we're passing through it."

Marion did not hear him, for the wind was whistling around her ears. The sun had gone down at last, and it was growing colder and colder, but she still stood at her post, drinking in the strange, wild beauty that surrounded her. Twilight was falling slowly, but the dull glow was fascinating. The horizon thrilled her very soul with its wonderful play of colors.

"It takes a long time for the reflection to pass away after the sun has disappeared," remarked the doctor, solemnly, "but, of all things upon earth, deliver me from a night upon the prairie! The mountain heights or some subterranean cavern would be preferable, I think. I can picture nothing so mournful or lonely!"

"I should go mad, I think," said Marion, smiling, "especially if there were buffalo or wild horses or other animals about and—oh, what if we should meet a band of Indians? Why, I should be frightened to death, even if I knew they were friendly!"

"Not much danger of thet thar," muttered the engineer, as he suddenly leaned from the window of the cab.

"No, Indians are as scarce as buffalo in this section," said the doctor; "the Indian reservations are farther west, Marion. The worst creatures that we would be apt to encounter here are prairie dogs and gophers."

"And they are cunning little fellows, at least the prairie dogs are," laughed Marion. "I've seen a lot of them in Bronx Park, but

perhaps they are not the same as they are in Kansas."

The doctor leaned forward as she was speaking and looked sharply at the engineer, who had the field glass to his eyes and was scanning the horizon. There was something in the grimy fellow's face that he could not understand, and at last he too leaned forward and peered out over the prairie.

Marion was gazing straight ahead, with her whole soul in her work. It was simply delightful to be controlling the great engine.

Dr. Brookes made one more effort to speak cheerfully before he allowed himself to be depressed by the look upon the engineer's face. As he peered sharply around, he put his hand upon her shoulder.

"I'll get you a civil service certificate when we get back to New York, Marion," he said, jokingly. "You are almost an expert engineer already!"

Marion turned her head to make laughing reply, but before the words left her lips a cry from the engineer stopped her.

"Look ahead thar, Jim!" he called, sharply, to the fireman. "Thet thar red glow ain't sunset by a powerful sight! Ther prairie's on fire, an' we've got ter run fer it!"

CHAPTER XI.

MARION OBEYS ORDERS.

Marion's hand dropped from the throttle with a frightened cry, but even in this first moment of peril it was not of herself that she was thinking.

"Oh, what will they do? The poor people we saw on horseback!" she cried in horror. "They will be burned to death! Nothing can prevent it!"

"Unless they have the luck to start a back fire in time," said the doctor, eagerly, but a shake of the engineer's head stopped him.

"Ther wind's wrong fer thet thar," he said, almost sharply. "Thar ain't no hope fer them an' it's er question ef we'll weather it."

"How far is it to Dodge City?" Dr. Brookes asked the question anxiously, but neither the engineer nor the fireman heard him. A moment passed in breathless silence.

"There's miles of wheat fields ahead of us," said the engineer at last. "And the grass is dry as a bone. I told Jim it would go before spring! Well, it's a blazin' fer fair, now. Thar won't be much left of it!"

Marion bit her lips and strained her eyes. There was no mistaking the red glow now, for a low, filmy cloud was hovering over the horizon.

Dr. Brookes moved involuntarily and put one arm around her, but his face had paled also as he thought of their danger.

In that awful moment, Marion revealed her wonderful strength of character. She did not lean upon the arm that encircled her so tenderly, but stood bravely erect, her head bent forward as if prepared to meet whatever should come upon them. It was a fearful sight, even for those who were familiar with it: that dull red glow, creeping so silently, yet so swiftly, and before long the first touch of its hot breath would fan their cheeks—the whole atmosphere of the prairie seemed to be growing warmer.

Dr. Brookes leaned from the window as the engineer drew in his head, but there was no ray of hope in any direction. It was a single-track road, so there was no going back, and to stand still and wait would only be folly.

He looked on grimly as the fireman heaped his fire. It meant a ride for life or death through the sea of flame that was approaching.

"Oh, doctor! Do you suppose they know?" cried Marion, suddenly. "The others, I mean! Oh, poor little Ruby! How it will frighten her!"

She was still thinking of the others, but the doctor thought only of her. Still, he must try to calm her fears, if possible.

"The conductor and trainmen must have seen it by this time," he answered, with his eyes on the distant glow. "For, see, it is spreading in every direction! We shall be able to see the flames in a minute."

Almost as he spoke a long line of red, darting flame appeared on the horizon. It was a weird, wonderful sight, but it chilled the blood in their veins as they gazed upon it.

The engineer released his hold on the throttle and reached for the field glasses

Marion had overcome her weakness and stepped forward quickly.

"Keep her just as she is till I tell yer," said the engineer, as he leaned out of the window and scanned the horizon.

The brave girl looked ahead. The fire was advancing. It was rolling toward them like a sea of flame. She shuddered as she thought of the cowboys.

Suddenly there came a jerk of the bell rope over her head, and the engineer's hand fell upon her own, which was resting upon the throttle.

The train was stopped so quickly that it nearly threw her off her feet; as it was, she was jammed violently against the doctor's shoulder.

A minute passed, and still there was no other signal. The engineer stood with his hand upon the throttle and a look of wonder on his features.

Suddenly a pistol shot rang out from the train behind them, and then a voice roared from one of the coaches:

"Start her quick, engineer! And go like blazes!"

The engineer still stood like a graven image. He was anxious to go, but the bell rope still dangled and he was not in the habit of obeying a stranger's orders.

What had happened in the train that they should stop at such a time?

It was a question which not one of the anxious occupants of the cab could answer.

The engineer and fireman stared at each other. Neither had recognized the voice and both were speechless. They wasted no words, but stood ready for action.

"Quick! Get a move on up there!" called the voice again, and this time both the doctor and Marion recognized the voice of Bert Jackson.

"Oh, do start, quick!" cried Marion, wildly. "Something awful must have happened! Quick, engineer! There is some good reason why we should hurry!"

She was so excited that she put her hand on the throttle as she spoke, but the engineer's hand closed over hers instantly.

"I take orders from ther conductor—no one else," he said, sharply.

There was another pistol shot, and another cry from Bert.

"The bell rope is cut, but, for God's sake, go forward and get to a station as quick as you can! Is there no one in that cab to take an order?"

Marion turned her back upon the distant glare so that the wind could carry her message:

"I'm here, Bert, and I'll start her!"

Her voice rang out like the notes of a bugle.

As she turned to the throttle again she saw that her words were possible.

Dr. Brookes had whipped out the revolver that Ajax had given him, and both the engineer and the fireman were "covered" by it.

The next second the great locomotive gave a fearful bound, then shot ahead like an iron meteor.

There was grim, terrible danger before them, but the young girl's courage did not falter. Five cars filled with human beings depended upon her deed. She determined to do her best to obey Bert's orders, and as they dashed madly on to meet the coming sea of flame her white hand alone rested upon the iron throttle.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RACE WITH DEATH.

On and on they went, with the strong current of air through the cab windows blowing hotter and hotter.

The great sea of flame was sweeping toward them now, and Marion caught glimpses of dark spots upon the prairie which she knew instinctively must be animals fleeing before the conflagration.

A half-hour passed, with the doctor standing like a grim sentinel, but the engineer was smiling as good naturedly as ever.

"I reckon yer doin' ther right thing," he had said, "but ef I'd er done it 'thout orders, ther thing would er been different. I'll keep my eye on ther gal, tho' she don't much need it."

The sky had darkened and night was coming on. The prairie would have been bathed in gloom were it not for the weird light of

the blazing grass, which flashed and paled upon the mirroring heavens.

Suddenly a vivid glow illumined the track before them. Marion caught a glimpse of four or five riders; then the glare seemed to envelope them in every direction.

Light puffs of smoke and flame rolled about them on every side, and, glancing back over her shoulder, she could see the roofs of every coach distinctly.

"They've done it! It's er back fire!" cried the engineer, hoarsely. "Ther wind hez shifted er little bit! Praise God, we'll run through ther wust of it in er jiffy!"

The fireman threw on more coal, and Marion moved the throttle. A thin veil of smoke shut the prairie from her view and the hot air tinged her cheeks as the train sped on, its wheels lapped by the waves of flame that were blown by the wind directly across the track.

"Great Heaven! What a ride!" muttered the doctor, as he returned his pistol to his pocket. There was not the slightest danger now of any one rebelling.

"It's ther third of ther kind I've had," answered the engineer, who had closed the windows of the cab and was now peering ahead, cautiously.

"It can't last long," began the doctor, hopefully, as he glanced at Marion's face. The engineer pointed to the horizon, which was already darkening.

"It's twixt hyar an' thar," he said, briefly. "No knowin' how fur back it started, but it's done its wust. A leetle more speed, miss! We'll be into it in er minute!"

His order was obeyed, and the great engine bounded on. It seemed to Marion as if she were riding on some gigantic comet.

Suddenly they seemed to plunge into darkness in the space of a second, but even the inexperienced young engineer knew what had happened.

The back fire had been outdistanced, and now only a brief breathing space intervened before they would rush headlong into the conflagration before them.

Marion set her teeth hard as she peered ahead. She could not see the track nor anything else, only the dull red line of the advancing enemy.

The minutes passed with the air in the cab growing hotter and hotter. Only the excitement of the situation kept the young girl from fainting.

Then, with a gentle roar, the wind-swept tide of fire was upon them, but Marion threw the throttle wide open at that instant and the iron monster rushed madly on, its whistle shrieking mocking defiance at the conflagration.

It was a frightful ride and one long to be remembered, but through the moments, which seemed like an eternity to Marion, she thought only of the poor unfortunates on horseback who were facing death upon the prairie. Would they escape unharmed? The question rang in her ears. As the train sped on, she felt sure of their own safety unless—— Here came the thought of that signal and Bert's anxious voice. Oh, if she only knew what had happened behind her in the coaches.

The illumination was fading now and the dullness of the evening seemed even blacker after the vivid glare.

The engineer opened a window cautiously, but closed it as a puff of smoke entered. It would be several minutes yet before they would be in absolute safety.

"A mile a minute, wasn't it?" asked Dr. Brookes, as he saw the grim old fellow looking at his timepiece.

The engineer chuckled and glanced at Marion.

"Better'n that thar, young man," was his only answer; then he turned again and opened the window.

A fairly cool breeze was wafted into the cab. It came like a refreshing breath to Marion's feverish cheeks.

"There's twenty minutes more fer ther run," he said, in a tone of relief. "Slow her down a leetle thar, miss, an' we'll make it on schedule!"

Marion moved the throttle, but her hand was trembling. Now that the danger of the fire was over, she could think of nothing but her friends in the train behind her, and she was almost frenzied with anxiety to know what had happened.

Dr. Brookes understood her, but there was no relieving her now. He was something of

an engineer, but the space was too small to move about in, and, besides, another signal might be given or another order from Bert, and he wished to be able to see it executed.

The young girl moved the throttle again and reduced the speed of the train. Almost the instant she did so the bell rope was jerked violently.

"What the deuce does that mean?" asked the doctor, sternly.

The engineer moved to touch the lever, and then his hand fell to his side as he caught Dr. Brookes' threatening gesture.

"Ye've got no notion of slowin' up, whoever ye be," he muttered, crossly. "It's lucky thar ain't no trains ter meet, fer ther ain't er switch 'twixt hyar an' Dodge City."

Marion waited for no more but pulled her throttle out. This time she was uncertain just what to do, but there was no time to think; she must act with decision.

Once more the train bounded forward over the heated rails. There were only twenty miles to run. They could slow down in a few minutes.

The whistle shrieked its warning as usual as they neared the station, for the engineer did not hesitate to perform that part of his duty.

Marion glanced ahead through the darkness to where innumerable starlike lights sparkled and twinkled.

They were nearing a town at last, after that mad, wild ride, and, as the reaction came upon her, her hand fell from the throttle.

Dr. Brookes caught her in his arms just as the train was stopped.

She had not faltered once until she had brought them to safety.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TROUBLE IN THE COACHES.

"What's the matter, engineer?"

The station master at Dodge City asked the question excitedly as the three men in the cab carefully lifted Marion to safety.

"God only knows!" was the answer. Then Dr. Brookes called out, sharply:

"Quick! Go through the train, somebody, and see what has happened! Where are the conductor and brakemen?"

"I'm the conductor, and Ajax and the other 'supe' are tending brakes!" bawled Bert, as he swung himself down from between the coaches. "Get in there quick, somebody, and help us out! We've got two train robbers aboard—a dead one and a live one—and the express messenger is half dead, but perhaps we can save him!"

Marion revived in time to hear the last words. As she leaned heavily upon the doctor's arm, she tried to ask a question.

"Quick! Ask him if they are safe—Alma and all the rest," she cried, weakly.

There was a general rush of station hands to go through the train, and in less than a minute all was confusion, so Marion was obliged to wait some time before her question was answered.

At last Bert came back to the waiting-room, where the doctor had taken her, and Marion uttered a cry of joy when she saw that Miss Allyn was with him.

"I'm all right, and so are the others," cried her friend, as she took her in her arms, "but, oh, Marion, we've had an awful experience. There were two robbers aboard and they nearly killed the express messenger! They intended to hold up the rest of the train, but Ajax prevented it!"

Marion grew calm instantly as soon as she heard that her friends were safe, and in another moment a score of passengers from the train came into the waiting-room.

"It was the pluckiest hold-up I ever saw," exclaimed one gentleman, excitedly, "and I ought to know, for I've seen a dozen!"

"There's a quarter of a million in that safe," called another man, "and, poor fellow, he stood at his post till he was shot down by a ruffian!"

"Oh, but he got a bullet, too," called out Bert's voice again. "Ajax plugged him full of holes in about a jiffy, and as for the fellow that held up the dining car—well, I fancy I peppered him! He's alive, though, and I'm glad of it! I should hate to have killed him!"

"And to think that Ajax was one of them at the start," broke in Mr. Temple. "He confessed to me that he intended to help rob the train, but he changed his mind just in time to save us."

"We'll have to hold the train till we get a

few affidavits," said the station master, abruptly. "The dead man is in the baggage room, and somebody has got to be tried for killing him. Just wait till I go out and corral a coroner's jury."

"Oh, we'll be the jury all right! We saw what happened," broke in Bert, again. "We were all in the dining car when we saw something was happening. There was a scuffle in the butler's pantry, or whatever they call it; then the door was locked on us and we were caught like rats in a trap—everybody but Ajax and a handful of passengers."

"And we made good time, I tell you!" cried one of the passengers. "A fellow with a black mask on told us to hold up our hands, but that big chap got the drop on him and down he went. Then we unlocked the dining car and got more help. We'd have had the thing over in a minute if one of them hadn't disabled the conductor."

"Yes, and then the robber stopped the train, expecting to skip with the money! Well, I put an end to that by bawling orders over the tender!"

"And Marion executed them!" exclaimed Dr. Brookes, springing upon a bench, where all could see him.

"The engineer refused to take such orders, of course, but Marion brought the train through that fire—every foot of the way! Not another hand but hers once rested upon the throttle!"

There was a cry of astonishment, and every one stared in amazement. The waiting-room was overflowing now, for all of the passengers had crowded into it.

"Marion! Is it possible!" Miss Allyn breathed the words, admiringly. "Why, you dear, brave girl! What an awful experience!"

"It was glorious, or it would have been, if I hadn't been so worried," answered Marion, quickly. "I was so anxious to know what had happened in the train, for, of course, I was astounded when Bert gave that order!"

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, we'll proceed to business!" called the station master, loudly. "I've wired the division superintendent what happened on the train, and we've got just thirty minutes to acquit this fellow."

Ajax came in as he spoke and stood quietly before them. There was a grin on his face, and he looked directly at Marion.

"Three wounded and one dead," called out a native of Dodge City. "I reckon now that erbout evens ther honors—only one was justifiable and t'other wasn't."

A paper briefly stating the facts of the case was passed around and all the passengers signed it; then the entire crowd moved out to the baggage room while the bluff coroner, who had been hastily summoned, viewed the body of the dead train robber.

Marion turned her eyes away. She could not bear to look on, and then some one led the conductor to the scene and let him tell his story. He had been shot in both arms, but they were bandaged carefully. "When they cut the bell rope I was unconscious," he said, proudly; "but when I came to we were going like mad. We were just cutting our way through that prairie fire! It's the first hold-up I ever had, and I don't want another."

"But here we are, safe and sound, and not a penny stolen," cried Bert. "I'm sorry for the conductor—he was awfully cut up—but three cheers for Marion, our new engineer! By getting us here quick she's saved the life of the messenger!"

The cheers were given with a will, and then every one piled back into the train.

When they pulled out of the station, scarcely an hour late, they had a new conductor and a new engineer.

No one slept that night, for the excitement had made them nervous, and for hours Marion lay in her berth talking softly to Miss Allyn.

"What do you think of the fortune teller now, Alma?" she said, almost solemnly. "Isn't it wonderful, to say the least, how near she foretold what has happened?"

Miss Allyn's answer startled her a little.

"Not a bit of it, Marion; but I forgot to tell you something! Ajax admitted to me that Madam Zhangara knew he had planned to help rob the train."

Marion gasped with horror, but it was a relief to know it. She disliked exceedingly to think she was growing superstitious.

"That is about all there is to fortune telling," went on Alma; "but she did hit it right when she said he was 'loyal and brave,' but, of course, she did not mean a word of it when she said it."

"She must be a very bad woman," Marion answered, slowly, "but Ajax has some good in him, at any rate, although I would not call him exactly a 'child of nature.'"

"If he has developed any goodness, it is since he met you, dearie," said Alma, sweetly. "Dr. Brookes told me that the change in the fellow was all due to your influence."

"That is a compliment, and one that I am proud of," was the young girl's happy answer, "for I do so long to wield a good influence over others. It seems to me to be one of the very sweetest joys of living."

The beautiful face was flushed as she spoke, for Marion was expressing one of her deepest sentiments.

The special train was waiting for them in

the station at Pueblo, and Bert was the happy recipient of a long letter from his foster-father.

Before they left they received word of the cowboys which brought smiles of relief to Marion's features. The back fire had saved them, even though the wind was not altogether in their favor, and after the smoke had cleared away they struck out once more across the blackened and scorched prairie and reached Dodge City in safety. Hearing on their arrival that Marion Marlowe had left Topeka for Denver and had just passed through Dodge City, they gave up the idea of seeing her, and proceeded to Topeka to attend the business end of their trip.

It was a bitter disappointment, as Marion's latest exploit had made them more anxious than ever to see the brave girl.

It was many days before Marion quite recovered from her thrilling ride, but her bravery had only made her dearer than ever to her faithful companions.

THE END.

Next week's MY QUEEN (No. 24) will contain "Marion Marlowe in Washington; or, Meeting the President." The company arrived at the capital in time for President McKinley's inauguration. Read of the brave deed Marion performed as the Presidential party were passing, of her startling experiences at the Inaugural Ball, and how she came to meet the President—the story complete in next week's MY QUEEN.

PATTERN COLUMN.

By special arrangements with the manufacturers we are enabled to supply the readers of MY QUEEN with the patterns of all garments described or illustrated in this column at TEN CENTS each. Address, "Pattern Column," MY QUEEN, 238 William Street, New York City.

☞ *In ordering patterns be sure to give size and number.*

FASHION NOTES.

Hand-painted designs decorate the toes of some of the new slippers.

Blouses of white silk mull, with the fine tucks stitched in with gold thread, are worn with the coat and skirt tailor gowns.

Many jackets of black fur have collars of white velvet or, more modish still, ermine. There is an increasing interest in black and white contrasts.

Ermine fur and white chiffon form a fashionable combination for evening and bridesmaids' hats, and a bunch of roses at one side is the only trimming.

Cloak and coat collars are very much trimmed on the inside with shirred black liberty silks. The shirrings have tucks so as to give them a full and becoming surface and increase the collar warmth.

Gold roses, made of pale gold tissue and grouped in small clusters of themselves, or mingled with other roses of contrasting color, are the latest things of the millinery world and are quite popular.

Lapped dress shirts buttoned at the top on each side of the front, with real or simulated buttonholes on the silk-lined flaps, will be a feature of many of the spring walking costumes. Some of the fastenings are laced across with silk cords, matching the simple fastenings on the waists and sleeves of cloth tailor costumes.

Although some of the tailors are making the straight coat sleeve, some trimming or fullness at the elbows seems more and more necessary. There was some idea that this fashion would die out when the cold weather arrived, but the winter street suits seem as elaborate in this respect as were the early autumn gowns.

No. 2443—GIRL'S DRESS, HAVING GUIMPE AND ONE-PIECE SKIRT.

Bright-red plaids are very much used for girl's dresses this winter. This pretty model has a full waist, cut rounding at the neck, and finished with a notched bertha. Red or white lawn is pretty for the guimpe. This model is suitable for making up in wool goods not too heavy, or for cotton fabrics.

The pattern is cut in sizes 6 to 12 years. Size 8 requires 5 3-4 yards of 21-inch, 3 3-4 yards of 32-inch, or 2 7-8 yards of 42-inch material. As shown, 1 7-8 yards of 42-inch, with 5-8 yard of silk and 6 yards of ribbon velvet. For the guimpe 7-8 yard of 36 inch material, with 1-2 yard of tucking.

No. 2414—TUCKED SHIRT WAIST.

Flannel in the new amber tint, known as champagne, is represented in this pretty model. The design is adapted to cloth, serge, flannel, wool, veilings or taffeta.

The pattern is cut in sizes 32 to 42 inches bust measure. Size 36 requires 4 yards of 21-inch, 3 1-4 yards of 27-inch, or 2 yards of 42-inch material.

The garment is neat, attractive and becoming and is likely to prove very popular in any of the fabrics just named.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY

GRACE SHIRLEY

NOTE.—This department is a special feature of this publication, and it will be appreciated, we feel sure, by all our readers. It is conducted by Miss Shirley, whose remarkable ability to answer all questions, no matter how delicate the import, is well known. Readers of "MY QUEEN" need not hesitate to write her on any subject. Miss Shirley will have their interests at heart and will never refuse her assistance or sympathy. As all letters are answered only through the columns of "MY QUEEN," it is unnecessary to enclose stamps.

So many letters are being received by Miss Shirley requiring answers in this department that we shall have to ask our correspondents to limit their letters to 200 words, in order that all may be answered. STREET & SMITH.

"I am sixteen years old and love a boy of eighteen. Most people say we go together, but they know more about it than I do. He has kissed me twice when I have been driving with him. He goes with other girls sometimes, and still he feels hurt when I mention any other boy's name. Should I cut his acquaintance or not?

"BELINDA D. S."

We do not think it necessary for you to drop this boy's acquaintance, as he is only a friend and not a lover. It will be well for you to be a little on your guard about kissing. You will find kissing far sweeter when you have found a true lover.

"I have become acquainted with a young physician who, every chance he gets, pays me marked attention. I admire him very much, but it seems strange to me that he has never asked me to allow him to call. Do you think it is my place to invite him? LAURIE F."

Ladies need not feel obliged to wait until a young man asks the privilege of calling, although this is commonly considered the proper thing to do. If you are sure that the young man is a desirable person to know there is no harm in asking him to call some time. Make the young man think that it is a mere courtesy of friendship, a favor offered because of your respect for him.

"About two years ago I was keeping company with a very nice young man. We were both greatly attached to each other. He finally got to going with other girls. I then started to go with a good Christian boy who devoted all his time to me for two years. I learned to like him very much and he says he loves me dearly. Then the other young man came back and wanted me to marry him. So I broke my engagement with the other young man and became engaged to this one, but now I do not know which I care for most. Do you think love will last a lifetime with one you learn to love, or is it better to love at first? Can I trust the one who treated me so mean now that I have let him come back? The young man whom I broke the engagement with lives next door and almost every time I see him I have to cry. Do you think that is because I love him? BERTHA H."

You are certainly in a very unpleasant position, Bertha, but it is our candid opinion that you had better not marry either of these young men at present. "Pity is akin to love," so we advise you to wait until this sympathy for number two develops. Another year will probably set the whole matter straight.

"I am only fifteen years of age and I love with all the depth of my heart and soul a young man of seventeen. Neither of our parents will consent to our marriage on account of our age, and so my lover has proposed our marriage without their consent. Would it be advisable?

"JOSIE R."

My dear Josie, you are a very foolish little girl to be thinking of marriage at your age, and a very wicked little girl to be planning to deceive your mother. I hope you will take Grace Shirley's advice and do just as your mother says. Do not dream of marrying your boy sweetheart. If you still love him at the age of eighteen I am sure your parents will not object to your marriage.

"I am desperately in love with a young gentleman and he persists in hugging me and showing his affection in several different ways, especially in public. Please tell me how I shall break him of the habit. MARJORIE L."

While it is poor taste on the young man's part to be demonstrative in public, yet it may be his nature, and, if so, you must be patient with him. You do not say that you are engaged to this young man, but I take it for granted that you are or you would not grant him the privilege of kissing you. We fancy that matrimony will cure him of the habit effectually. Let us know when you anticipate taking these heroic measures.

"I am sixteen years old and always wanting to be a nurse. What would I have to do to get into the hospital and what age would I have to be?

"GRACE L."

You must be eighteen years of age before you can enter a training school for nurses. Write to

whichever hospital you choose, addressing the "Superintendent of Nurses," and ask for an application blank. Fill this out properly and return it to the superintendent. That means that your name will be considered in the regular order. You need to have a good education and a robust constitution to take the training school course in any hospital.

"I am over seventeen years of age. The other night as I was coming home I met a young man whom I know by sight. He offered to accompany me home, which he did. He asked if he could call, but I refused him. Did I do right? I wish to make the acquaintance of two charming young ladies whom I have known for the last seven months by sight only. Could you tell me how to manage it? PAULINE K."

If the young man is only a casual acquaintance it is well to refuse your company, especially as you are too young to be receiving calls from any but family friends. Do you not know some mutual friend who can introduce you to the two young ladies? If not, try to find out whether or not the young ladies would be pleased to know you, and, if you think the pleasure would be mutual, there is no reason in the world why you should not tell them frankly of your desire to know them. Between girls of your age there is no need for strict conventionality.

"I am acquainted with two young men, but the one I care most for does not seem to care for me. What can I do to win his affection?
"CLARA A. S."

"I am deeply in love with a young man, but he does not return my affection. He used to profess that he loved me, but now a girl with money and a pretty face has won his affection. Now, how can I win his affection back? I don't know what I shall do if I don't succeed in winning it back BLANCHE C."

To "Clara A. S." we would say you must allow love to take its course; you cannot coerce it.

It is a foolish waste of time, Blanche, to try and win back an affection that has been transferred. Why not try to cast the old love from you? Interest yourself in other matters and let the young man go his way. Perhaps, in time, he may repent of his fickleness and come back to you, but he will not come a minute sooner by anything that you can do or say.

"I am a constant reader of the 'My Queen' series and am delighted with them, and on looking over the Correspondence Department, I always find sufferings and troubles, and it makes me very sad to think the 'poor girls' are getting so deceived, and also getting in such a 'hurry' to marry. I am a married woman and I don't think there is any happier woman living to-day than I am. My husband is all the world to me, and we love each other dearly. We have been married nearly six years, and we live every day alike, perfect harmony in every sense of the word. I am only two or three years his junior, and he is nearly forty. Marriage is all right in its way. But there is altogether too many ways of abusing the union, and I do not think any person ought to take that step until they positively know they love each other and intend to live true, upright and honest, as I do not believe in divorces. You deserve to have great credit, Miss Shirley, in answering the questions for everybody, all ages and classes. E. W. R."

Many thanks for your kind words for "My Queen." We are delighted to print your letter and congratulate you on the success you seem to have made of your married life.

"I am desperately in love with a girl who lives in the country We keep up a correspondence. She has four or five fellows in love with her and she intends to take the first one that proposes and learn to love him afterward. Please tell me how to propose. L. H B."

We do not advise you to propose to this girl as her matrimonial methods are not to our liking. The girl who takes the first man that offers is more than likely to be over-anxious to marry and not infrequently she "marries in haste to repent at leisure." Wait until you have really won the love of some girl and then you will have no difficulty in 'popping the question.'

"I am sixteen years old and a fellow has asked me to go to a dance with him. He wants me to wear a low neck dress as my neck is very pretty. He says he will take another girl if I will not wear a low neck and try to look attractive. He will take the girl that he goes with sometimes. I don't like her as she is my rival. SARAH R."

You are entirely too young to be going to lances with young men, and especially with such a young man as the one you describe. No young man with immodest ideas of dress is a suitable companion for you, and we advise you most earnestly to let the other girl have him.

"I am a girl of fifteen and am desperately in love with a handsome young man. The only objection that I see to him is that he smokes cigarettes, and is rather fast, and has sworn in my presence two or three times. He has never proposed, but has come pretty near it, and as he loves me very dearly, I know that he will before long. EMILY F."

Some of the best men we know smoke cigarettes and men with international reputations for courage and honor have been known to swear. Perhaps you can influence your lover to give up both his cigarettes and profanity, but do not "nag" him to do so. Remember you may have faults of your own. Chewing gum, for instance, is almost as vulgar as smoking cigarettes, and talking slang is almost as bad as swearing.

"I am in love with a young man. He is twenty and I am eighteen years of age. My lover is a perfect gentleman in every respect, but he asked me to kiss him once and I slapped him in the face. He got mad at me, but we made up, and after that I kissed him several times, and once I put my arms around his neck and hugged and kissed him good-night. Of late, he seems to have grown cold and began to go with another girl. He went away about a month ago and has not

written to me since he left. I believe he thinks he can go with other girls and come back to me when he gets ready. Do you think it wise to return his picture and letters and ask for mine? Please tell me if you think he cares for me as he should. RACHEL E. M."

We do not think the young man cares very much for you and advise you to think as little about him as possible. You need not return anything at present. Just pay no attention to him in any way. It was rather unladylike to slap his face, as you might have reproved him by a milder method.

"I have just finished the last issue of 'My Queen,' and cannot tell you how much I enjoyed reading it, only I don't like murder and thievery associated with Marion's sweet manners. Don't you really agree with me? I am nineteen years old and am considered the prettiest girl in town (it is a small one), and have a good figure. What is the best way of letting a gentleman know you do not like flattery without seeming rude?

"IRMA."

Murder and thievery are certainly unpleasant, and we can assure you that many of Marion's adventures will be entirely free from them. The easiest way to show a man that you dislike flattery is to pay no attention to his speeches and turn the subject as soon as possible.

"I think Marion Marlowe is the bravest girl in the world to go through all she has. She deserves to have a husband just as brave as she is herself, and I really hope he is to be Dr. Brookes. Don't you think he is worthy of a wife like Marion? Do you think Marion loves him better than she does Mr. Ray? What has become of Miss Allyn? Is she already married to Mr. Fairfax? How is Bert Jackson getting along? What are Marion's parents doing and how is that girl they have in their charge? I wish this lovely story would go on forever, but in the meantime I would like to read other books like 'Faithful Shirley.'

"PRIMROSE R. S."

We agree with you in thinking Marion brave, and that she deserves a brave husband, and we feel reasonably sure that our hopes in her direction will some day be fulfilled. It is impossible for others to tell who a young girl loves best when she admits that she does not know herself. Dr. Brookes certainly is worthy of a girl like Marion. As for Marion's parents, they were, at last accounts, living quietly at their old home.

Alma Allyn's marriage will be spoken of in due time, and Bert will give a good account of himself week by week. No doubt you have read "Little Women," "For Gold or Soul," and "As We Forgive." If you have not, we are sure that you could do so with much pleasure.

"I am in love with a young man and he seems to be with me. We were engaged for two years. We broke up—it was his fault—and I would not have anything more to do with him. Now he acts as if he would like to go with me again, but is afraid to ask for fear I will snub him again. I have encouraged him by smiling and speaking pleasantly when I have seen him, but that didn't help matters, so for a long time I have been apparently indifferent, and have let him see me enjoying myself with other young men, but that doesn't seem to work. Would it be a good plan for me to leave town for a few weeks, leaving the impression that I had gone for good and see how he acts when I come back?

"UNHAPPY HEART."

The fact that the young man has not found solace in the company of other women would seem to show that he still cares for you. We would advise that the next time you meet you ask him to call upon you, appointing a particular evening for him to do so. After the ice is once broken in this way it is probable that he will speedily show his desire to renew your former relations.

"I am a young widow, twenty-seven years of age, and am in love with a young drug clerk who works near where I reside. I love him dearly, and I suppose he loves me also. But lately where he is employed there are certain young ladies who frequent the store with whom he seems to be quite friendly and who seem to be drawing him from me. I want to get married, and he keeps putting it off. I want to know if you think his intentions are of the best or how I can find out if his love is true. ELLA B."

Are you not worrying unnecessarily? You do not state that your lover is showing these other women any attention except in the course of his business. If his income warrants your early marriage, why do you not insist upon its taking place by a certain date, with the alternative that you will cancel the engagement then if the marriage is again postponed? Some men are naturally dilatory even in love affairs.

"I wrote you a few weeks ago asking you if you would give me the benefit of your advice, as I know you do others in your correspondence columns. I am very much disappointed in realizing that you have paid no attention to my question that I submitted to you. AMEDEE."

If your letter was correctly addressed and reached us, Amedee, it was answered, as every letter addressed to Miss Grace Shirley or to "My Queen" receives our immediate attention. For your benefit, and, possibly, for that of other readers, we may state that the weekly edition of "My Queen" is so large that considerable time is consumed in the mere printing and handling of copies, in spite of the enormous resources of the publishers. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary that ample time be given Miss Shirley to prepare these letters for the hands of the printer. Every letter that reaches us is read by Miss Shirley, personally, and the attention given these interesting epistles occupies a large part of the time of this gifted author. If you do not see your letter and its answer in print within three or four weeks of its sending, that is no reason to think that we have neglected you. Your letter will be printed in its regular course, and will not be overlooked in any event.

STREET & SMITH.

"To no one else but you, Miss Shirley, would I dream of telling this! For the first time in my life I have told my papa that I was of age and could do as I pleased. My mother is dead and my brother in Michigan wants me to come out there, and papa says if I go I can stay. My brother is not papa's own son. Do you think papa would be glad to have me come home or not? It is Christmas night and I am very lonely. Papa is probably in some saloon. I long for a loving, gentle husband, who would appreciate what I did for him. Excuse my poor writing, for through tears one cannot write good.

"NORA G."

Poor Nora! We sympathize with you most sincerely. No doubt, if you go to your brother for a time your father will be only too glad to get you back—you know his disposition best, but, suppose he did insist upon your staying, would you not be better off to remain with your brother? You have every right in the world to consider your own interests under the circumstances.

"I have a young man friend, and would like to know if it was right for me to write him a Christmas letter? I am seventeen. He is a very nice young man and has been calling at my house for four years, ever since I was a child in school.

"LAURA B."

We see no harm in your writing the young man a pleasant note and wishing him a Merry Christmas. You might have added that you hoped the new year would be a happy one for him. If you have a mother or sisters, you can ask them if they approve, and, if they wish, to add the season's greetings.

"While visiting in the country three years ago I was introduced to a young man one year older than myself. I like him better than any young man I have yet seen, and have reason to believe he thinks a great deal of me. He can converse fluently on nearly every subject, although at times his language is somewhat ungrammatical, because he has never had the advantages of a proper education. This is the only objection my parents have to this young man, and they think I ought to look higher. Now, what I want to ask is, ought I to let education stand in the way of a union? EDYTHE FRANCES."

Many of our bravest, noblest and best men have been sadly lacking in "book learning," yet who has remembered that trifling fact when lauding their great deeds and glorious triumphs?

No, the lack of education is to be regretted, but not condemned! If that is the only fault the young man has, we think that he is to be congratulated.

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AFTER GRIP WHAT?

The Perilous Period Which Follows an Attack of this Mysterious Malady.

Grip is bad enough with its aching bones, inflamed eyes, painful back, and fever. But its after effects are perhaps even more to be dreaded than the misery attendent on an attack of the disease itself. The person who comes safely through an attack of grip, man, woman, or child, is left in a condition of peculiar debility and prostration from which it is difficult to rally. A slight cold or cough may find speedy termination in lung disease. Ordinary exposure results in pneumonia. The disease seems to deplete the

vitality, undermine the strength, and affect the balance of the mind. It is one of the sad experiences of the grip, that the convalescent supposed to be rallying well, has been found in a condition of complete collapse.

As a result of the grip the lungs, and other organs of respiration, seem peculiarly liable to be affected, and consumption may easily be the after consequence of the malady. It needs no argument therefore to urge the building up of the system weakened by grip to enable it to resist and throw off these sequent diseases which so frequently prove fatal.

In actual test Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery has proved itself peculiarly valuable not only in the quick cure of the disease but also in rebuilding the body which grip has undermined, and in curing diseases which are prone to fasten on the enfeebled system. It strengthens the stomach, heals the lungs, and purifies the blood. It puts the whole body on a plane of sound and vigorous health.

A VICTIM OF GRIP.

"Two years ago this month I had an attack of grip which left my throat and lungs in bad condition," writes Mrs. M. E. Stewart, of Center, Chickasaw Nation, Ind. Ter. "The doctor said I had disease of the bronchial tubes, but confessed to my husband (unknown to me), that I had consumption in the first stage and could never be cured; but, thanks to God and to Dr. Pierce, to-day I feel well, and am better now than I have been for many years. I can do as much work now as any woman of my age, which is forty-seven. One of my neighbor women advised me to get Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, so I sent and got it, and then I was not satisfied with it alone, hardly believing it would cure me, so I wrote to Dr. Pierce and gave him my symptoms. He replied that I had catarrh of the head, extending to my lungs, and told what would cure me. I took his advice—never neglected it for anything. I have taken seventeen bottles of 'Golden Medical Discovery,' eight vials of Dr. Pierce's Pellets, and ten packages of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy. I do not regret that I spent the money paid for the medicines. I have gained twenty-four pounds. Indeed, Dr. Pierce's medicines have done wonders for me It is no use for me to try to tell my feelings. It would take time and space, but I was a skeleton and so poor and so down-hearted I could not look at one of my little ones without shedding tears, thinking that they would soon be left without a mother."

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MY QUEEN

A Weekly Journal for Young Women

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